

Right NOW!

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TV— **sex and vileness**

Interviews:

Sir George Gardiner
& General Sir
Walter Walker

Also:

Equal opportunities – or envy?
A socialist looks at NATO
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Lunch with Alan Clark

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Needed: An imaginative, flexible new Right for a new era

As this will be the last issue of *Right Now* before January 2000, it seems fitting to peer into the future to see the possible shape of the 21st Century Right.

As always, by "Right", we mean all those politically or culturally active people who believe in patriotism, freedom and preserving Western civilisation, howsoever they may vote in elections, and however they may differ from each other on less fundamental matters. We members of this informal grouping, despite our best efforts, have seen our country and the civilisation of which it is a part slip inexorably away from us.

Although some good things happened under Margaret Thatcher, much more important things were not tackled at all through lack of time or foresight or unwillingness to tackle the 'liberal' consensus, and many people were unnecessarily alienated. There is surely one thing on which we can all agree – that the Right has not been as effective as it might have been.

In the 21st Century, the Right will need to be more socially aware, more populist and more interested in culture than before.

- We need to think about what we want to achieve – and what we *can* achieve. Purism has little place in politics.
- We need to co-operate. To expect complete unity would be naive, and would probably not be desirable. But it is realistic to hope for a greater degree of activity co-ordination and information-sharing.
- We need to select our battlefields more carefully. Undirected outrage is quickly dissipated, and such limited firepower as we have needs to be brought to bear on specific targets.

● We need to get more young people involved. This can only be done if the Right sheds its image of being boring and 'establishmentarian', and seizes the moral high ground. We are the *true* radicals; we are the *real* underdogs – this is the twin message which will attract the young.

- We need to be more imaginative and more prepared to use modern language and methods of communication.
- We must engage in cultural as well as political warfare and encourage participation in the arts by those of 'sound' views.
- We must make common cause with others who do not share the Blair/Clinton view of the world as an all-encompassing, politically correct, increasingly global state, run by neo-Roundheads, technocrats, big businessmen and token equal opportunities

appointees. We should link up with those of all political traditions who believe in localism, regionalism, patriotism, communitarianism, ecologism, traditionalism, social conservatism and freedom of expression.

- We must give up some of our facile and pleasing assumptions, such as that the Euro is bound to collapse, that various "conspiracies" are to blame, or that the people of England will one day rise spontaneously in righteous indignation. The Euro is backed by all the combined industry of Europe's richest countries; we alone are to blame for our plight and no people ever rises at all without proper leadership.

There is a great deal that needs to be done. But, despite all the mistakes and missed opportunities, there is still a great deal of hope.

There is still a corpus of national sentiment that can be capitalised upon. Most people are still capable of outrage – or at least considerable unease – at the depredations carried out against our culture. Our views are perennially attractive, because they are in accord with virtually all tradition, experience, biology, human needs and vestigial moral feelings. There are a great many intelligent and sensible people active on our side. Our opponents have a natural tendency to overplay their hand. Like all totalitarians *manqué*, they are drunk with power. Their "rainbow coalition" of ethnic minority racists, men-haters, militant homosexuals, Stalinists, liberation theologians and *angst*-ridden do-gooders is inherently unstable. Finally, our opponents fear us enormously – perhaps more than we deserve to be feared.

Eventually, our opponents' lies will become too flagrant and their divisions too obvious, and we will win, almost despite ourselves. But why wait so long? Let us expedite our ultimate triumph, by coming out swinging and hungry on 1st January.

Kosovo and other controversies

The recent NATO intervention in Kosovo has caused much controversy amongst our readers. We aim to express as many different views as possible on this contentious subject. To this end, this issue contains the very different views of former NATO Commander-in-Chief, General Sir Walter Walker, Leftwing academic Professor Kenneth Bell and letter-writer R Moore. We are always interested in receiving articles or letters for possible publication on any topic, although of course there can be no guarantee that all items received will be used. □

Conservatism and the death of Britain

A Conservative Party that has abandoned conservatism is in no position to criticise 'New Labour', argues Patrick Roche

John Redwood's recent book, *The Death of Britain*, develops the core understanding that "the United Kingdom is being destroyed from within and without". That is indeed the case. But it is a remarkable feature of *The Death of Britain* that Northern Ireland is mentioned only twice in the entire book.

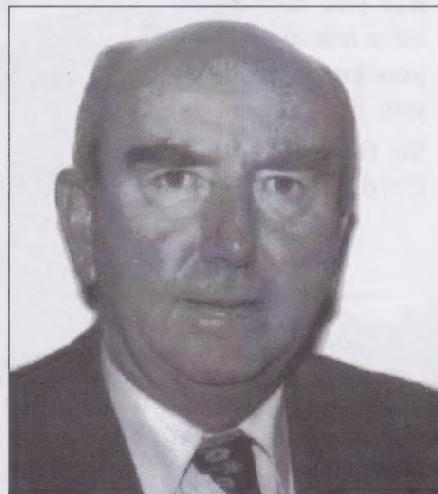
That is remarkable for the simple reason that in a very real sense the death of Britain has actually occurred in Northern Ireland. This claim presupposes an understanding of what it is to be British. The political content of what it is to be British consists in a patriotic loyalty to democratic practice and the rule of law within the Union. This means that a radical corruption of democratic practice and the rule of law or the destruction of the integrity of the Union would virtually remove the political basis of what it is to be British.

But that is precisely what has happened in Northern Ireland as a result of the so-called 'peace process' and the Belfast Agreement. The Agreement fully accepts the Irish nationalist claim that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland with a 'right of self-determination' or self-government. This concession to Irish nationalism reduces unionism to a 'tradition' within the Irish nation and entirely undermines the legitimacy of the constitutional status of Northern Ireland within the Union.

But this fundamental concession to Irish nationalism did not originate with 'New Labour'. The recognition of the absurd nationalist claim that there is a single nation on the island of Ireland was a core part of the Downing Street Declaration of 15th December 1993. The Declaration was, of course, negotiated by the Major government and subsequently given overwhelming approval by Parliament. This simply means that as far back as 1993 the integrity of the Union was undermined from within the House of Commons on the initiative of a Conservative government.

The Belfast Agreement does not merely undermine the integrity of the Union. The Agreement is a radical corruption of democratic practice and the rule of law. The terms of the Belfast Agreement provide for members of the so-called republican movement to govern the very citizens of Northern Ireland that the IRA has terrorised for thirty years while IRA terrorist prisoners are released. The Agreement contains no requirement for the IRA to 'decommission' its terrorist arsenal. The Agreement requires the destruction of the RUC and the Patten Commission (chaired by a self-proclaimed champion of democracy and the rule of law) has more than adequately delivered on this requirement.

This corruption of democratic practice and the rule of law was rooted in the Mitchell Report of 22nd January 1996. Apart from supplying both finance and guns to the IRA, this has been the major political contribution of the United States to the situation in Northern Ireland. Senator George Mitchell was appointed by the Major administration on 28th November 1995 to chair the International Commission on Decommissioning. This appointment represented a gross subservience to United States influence and was in fact an abdication of domestic responsibility on the part of the Major government to uphold the rule of law in the United Kingdom. The appointment of George Mitchell to chair the International Commission (and his subsequent role as chairman of the negotiations that led to the Belfast Agreement) established a powerful American influence within the politics of Northern Ireland. This influence was directed by an Irish nationalist caucus within the Clinton administration in a manner entirely inimical to both the rule of law and the Union.



Patrick J Roche is Deputy Leader of the Northern Ireland Unionist Party and Northern Ireland Assembly Member for Lagan Valley.

The Mitchell Report was substantively based on the Sinn Fein/IRA submission, *Building a Permanent Peace*, of 19 January 1995 to the Mitchell Commission. The Report did not require the IRA to 'decommission' as a condition of Sinn Fein participation in the negotiations that produced the Belfast Agreement. The Report deployed a sophisticated but devious use of language to suggest a requirement to decommission when in fact the Report contained no such requirement. Exactly the same abuse of language was used in the Belfast Agreement. The Agreement permits Sinn Fein to participate in the Executive without any

requirement for the IRA to decommission its terrorist arsenal. This corruption of language and of democratic practice was required to ensure Sinn Fein participation in the negotiations and to produce an Agreement acceptable to the IRA.

The corruption of the political life not merely of Northern Ireland but of Parliament itself has accelerated under 'New Labour'. Take, for example, the 1999 Northern Ireland (Location of Victims Remains) Act. This Act prohibits the admissibility in criminal proceedings of information resulting from the recovery of the remains of IRA victims (the "disappeared") except where such evidence is "adduced on behalf of the accused". The Act is in effect a legalised obstruction of justice literally dictated to Parliament by the IRA as the condition for disclosing information (which was entirely inadequate if not deliberately misleading) about the location of the graves of individuals who had been abducted and murdered by the IRA. The so-called 'peace process' is now sustained by legalised criminality (of which the Location of Remains Act is but one example) and by a mendacity that has become the very substance of political discourse in Northern Ireland. But this process of political and moral corruption was in its origin initiated by a Conservative Government backed by virtually the entire House of Commons.

The Belfast Agreement concedes the integrity of the Union and corrupts the practice of democracy. But that simply means that the Belfast Agreement (not once mentioned in John Redwood's book) has massively contributed to what may yet bring about the death of Britain.

How did this state of affairs come about? Probably for two reasons. First, the public morality required to sustain the rule of law has been virtually replaced in Parliament by an expediency that places no constraints on the appeasement of terrorism. Secondly, within the Conservative Party the Union is in effect confined to Great Britain. Northern Ireland is literally a 'place apart'.

Unprincipled expediency and a restricted understanding of the Union now permeate the Conservative Party. The result has been the death of authentic conservatism in Britain because the essence of British conservatism is commitment to the preservation of the Union. 'New Labour' is indeed destroying the United Kingdom. But as far as Northern Ireland is concerned the roots of this destruction lie elsewhere. The death of Britain is rooted in the death of authentic conservatism in the United Kingdom. This is an understanding that John Redwood has yet to acquire. □

A "bastard" speaks out

Derek Turner interviews leading Euro-sceptic and former Referendum Party MP, Sir George Gardiner

You are famous for your opposition to John Major over Maastricht, and for his reference to you and other Euro-sceptics as "bastards".

What are your reflections on the European elections?

I think that the outcome of the European election was absolutely fantastic. Labour tried to pretend that Europe wasn't the issue but a lot of their regular voters saw through this. The Pro-Euro rebels scored ludicrously low votes. UKIP's three Members are a reminder to the Conservatives that there are other places for people to go if they are not satisfied with the Tory stance on Europe. I don't think the Tories need get so worked up about UKIP. These people will be on the same side as us in a referendum, so let's be tolerant of differences.

After you broke with your constituency Conservative Association, you sat briefly as MP for the Referendum Party, and were close to the counsels of James Goldsmith. What are your recollections of that period?

I describe much of this in my book. [Editor's note: *A Bastard's Tale*, Aurum Press, 1999. See book review on page 18.] The press covered the founding of The Referendum Party very well, but this initial interest had died down by the time I joined. When it came to the election, I think there was almost an Establishment closing of ranks – they wouldn't even recognise that Jimmy Goldsmith was out there. We had a great rally at Alexandra Palace, which 10,000 people attended. It was the biggest rally held in London since Churchill's heyday, yet it got only about eight seconds on television. I was very annoyed by John Humphreys and Jonathan Dimbleby, who had debates on Europe yet squeezed out the one person who had made Europe the main issue. It was a total distortion.

It must be admitted that some of those programmes which really ought to have included us were filmed on Sundays. At the time I didn't know it, but every Sunday Jimmy Goldsmith was having chemotherapy treatment in France. But once the election got going, Alistair McAlpine could have been called in more often to represent our case.

I was a little critical of the way the Referendum candidates had to go just for the referendum issue and could not rope in other things which in their constituencies might have gone down very well. This curtailed press coverage. All sorts of issues came up in the election which were not solely Europe, but where one could have got a European angle across – agriculture, BSE, small businesses and so on.

The Referendum Party suffered by not having recognised spokesmen on these matters.

Goldsmith's principal achievement was to get the promise of a referendum before joining a single currency. John Major thought he was fobbing Goldsmith off with that pledge. But once the Tories had given that commitment, Blair had to follow suit – although he won't have a referendum unless he thinks he's going to win it and there's not much likelihood of that at the moment.

In the 1970 election you took Heath's line rather than Powell's. Bearing in mind the two men's subsequent careers, what would you do if you had your time again?

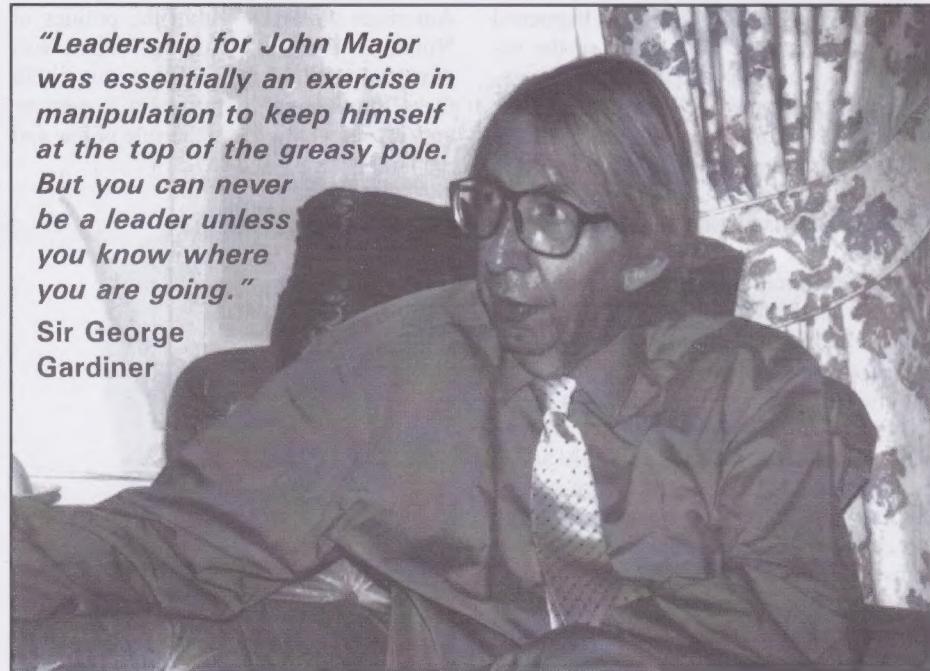
Despite the rhetoric of Mrs Thatcher on such issues as Europe, Northern Ireland and immigration, very serious mistakes were made all through the Conservatives' period in office.

Why? Are MPs just too tied up with committee and constituency work to read what they are signing?

At the time, the Single European Act made a lot of sense to people like me who had always supported the idea of a common market. It seemed merely to be completing the Common Market we had campaigned for in the referendum. Lady Thatcher will now acknowledge that she didn't realise the can of worms she was opening once qualified majority voting was extended. I know she also regrets signing

"Leadership for John Major was essentially an exercise in manipulation to keep himself at the top of the greasy pole. But you can never be a leader unless you know where you are going."

Sir George Gardiner



I would not be as critical of Enoch Powell as I was. I was standing as Tory candidate in Coventry South, and a lot of my supporters were paid-up Tories who saw Enoch as their patron saint. There's no doubt that his "rivers of blood" speech divided the party. Equally, to get anywhere in Coventry South as it was then constituted, I had to win some votes from its Asians, and I did get quite a number of votes from Sikhs. If I'd gone the other way I could have waved goodbye to those. It was difficult to work out. But I got to know Enoch much better when I was an MP and came to like and respect him very much. We fought devolution battles and opposed Prior's Northern Ireland Assembly Bill together. I now wish Heath could have found a way of not sacking him from the Shadow Cabinet.

the Anglo-Irish Agreement. I think I abstained on the Ireland vote. I was sorely tempted to vote against it but Margaret was setting so much store by it that I thought that I couldn't do it to her. I really should have had the courage of my own convictions. I don't know that she would have resented it terribly – I rebelled against three-line whips in her time and she greeted me the next day as if nothing had happened.

Inevitably MPs sign up to things that are not their speciality. If you do not have direct knowledge, then you go along with most of your colleagues on most topics.

On education, why weren't the Leftwing teacher training colleges dealt with? What other regrets do you have?

They certainly weren't tackled early enough. I put this down in great part to the great battle with Arthur Scargill. Scargill consumed much time and energy and thought, time we should have spent rethinking our educational and health policies. There were other areas we neglected. For example, by the time the community charge was introduced, all sorts of other pressures were being brought to bear on the domestic budgets. Once the Treasury and Nigel Lawson were against it, you couldn't really introduce a different form of taxation. I still think the concept of the community charge was essentially Tory and I regret it did not succeed. Another regret from the Thatcher era is that we didn't begin early enough to reform local government.

Didn't Thatcherite individualism, as exemplified in her famous comment that "there is no such thing as society", go too far?

She wanted individual responsibility. Individualism has always to be restrained by respect for other individuals. Individualism can only work within a legal and moral structure; but governments can't possibly do the work of religion. The churches should do more in supporting moral society. I believe all churches have failed in their responsibility here. I am not just criticising the Anglican church, although I am a convert to Rome. When you run into churchmen who doubt the existence of God it doesn't help. Now that people react against authority, the churches are trying to say that they are not authoritarian. I regret the decline in respect for morality in my lifetime. During the Thatcher years we didn't attach enough respect to community. We restricted, rather than reformed, local government and in the process destroyed a great powerbase of the Party in local government. Now, thankfully, we're building it up again.

Why did your various attempts to bring back capital punishment fail?

Whenever attempts were made to restore capital punishment for one type of crime or other, the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties always voted solidly against it, despite the fact that many grassroots Labour and Liberal Democrat voters supported it, and the Conservatives were split. The Tories represented the national diversity of opinion but the other parties did not. I had hopes when Margaret had such large majorities over two Parliaments that this would tip the balance. But as many Tory "antis" came in as "pros". This issue cut across Left-Right divisions. For example, Ian Gow voted in favour of an amendment once or twice but by and large was against it on Christian grounds, whereas Michael Mates was very much in favour. How this came about I don't know. Why did no Labour MPs feel obliged to go along with what a lot of working-class Labour voters wanted? In the end, it was a failure of democracy.

I remain convinced of the efficacy of capital punishment. Since 1954 we have seen a great growth in violent crime. Part of the cause of this is that the criminal fraternity has less respect for human life than it did in 1954. Criminals now mug someone in the street without being terribly worried about whether their victim dies. Some burglars reason that it is better to shoot someone, even policemen, to try to get away, since if they are caught they will go down anyway.

Haven't the recent Conservative Party reforms concentrated too much on administration, and not enough on policies?

The reforms in administration are valuable. William Hague has made us a genuinely democratic party. Take Maastricht. My constituency activists were two to one suspicious of Maastricht. At supper clubs and dinners I found much the same: the activists, those who read their papers properly, didn't like Maastricht but they wanted to be loyal to Major. When Party Chairman Mawhinney instituted his great consultation about future policies it came through loud and clear that the Party did not want any further European integration, nor the Euro. But all that was hushed up or played down because Major was trying to keep his balancing act going. The voice of the party was ignored. It was ignored over Maastricht and it was ignored afterwards, right up until the last election. Tory activists didn't go through a sea change to support Hague's European policy; that had been their view all along. They'd been asked before but the figures had never been recorded. Doubtless, this system will have to be refined further. How this will work when we are in government again I just don't know. You can't have a government continually putting policies to referenda within its own party.

Because so much effort has gone into the European policy other policy needs have been brushed aside. We certainly need a better thought-out transport policy. We also need more considered policies on education and the NHS. We are in dire need to have policy papers put forward now, whether they are to be put to an internal Party ballot or not. We have the European policy now for the next election but it is still a little negative. I am looking forward to the Lord Nott commission, which will, I hope, show what glowing prospects there are for us outside the Euro as a world trading partner. This will give us a much more positive line when campaigning.

The accusation is often made that Rightists are too "pragmatic", which means that they end up reacting to Leftist political and cultural initiatives rather than trying to carry through positive ideas of their own.

In the short term you obviously often have to be pragmatic. Thatcher was often pragmatic when dealing with Arthur Scargill. She even retreated at one point because

she wasn't ready for the battle. There is definitely a role for pragmatism in government and in Party leadership, but this is not a substitute for the ideological spur. Politicians must have an ideology. You become a politician because you want to improve our national wellbeing, whether you come from the Left or the Right. A politician without an ideology is a mere placeman. There are perhaps too many placemen in politics on all sides. Leadership for John Major was essentially an exercise in manipulation to keep himself at the top of the greasy pole. But you can never be a leader unless you know where you are going.

The Party has moved Right in economics but seems to have shifted to the Left in other respects. For instance, why did William Hague send a message of support to the "Gay Pride" festival?

I can understand tolerance of homosexuals but the homosexual lobby is something different. I don't know whether WH thought that through. Michael Portillo has been saying that perhaps we need to reassess our views on certain minorities, but I would say that we didn't do enough while in government to support the family. The nearer you get devolution down towards family level the better. By "family" I mean the broader definition – though I find it hard to believe you can have a homosexual family, which seems to me to be a contradiction in terms. I wouldn't be too censorious about heterosexual couples who have been together a long time. We should do a lot more to support the family unit, which is the bedrock of our society. I also believe we should retain two allowances – the married couples allowance and the age allowance to help pensioners – and sweep away all others. □

Sir George Gardiner

Born 3rd March 1935. Educated Harvey Grammar School, Folkestone, and Balliol (1st Class Hons). Married (1st) 1961, two sons, one daughter (2nd) 1980. Secretary, Oxford University Conservative Association. Chief Political Correspondent, Thomson Regional Newspapers, 1964-74.

Former contributor to *Sunday Express*, *Daily Mail*, *Daily Express*, *Mail on Sunday* and the *Times*.

MP (Conservative, latterly Referendum) for Reigate, 1974-1997. Member, Select Committee on Home Affairs and its Sub-committee on Race Relations & Immigration, 1979-1982. Secretary, Conservative European Affairs Committee, 1976-1979, Vice Chairman 1979-1980, Chairman 1980-1987. Executive, 1922 Committee, 1987-1993. Vice-Chairman, Conservative Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Sub-committee, 1988-1997.

Member of Council, Conservative Way Forward, 1991-1997. Contested Reigate for Referendum Party 1997. Member of UK Advisory Board, European Foundation, 1998-date.

Corrupting society and its people

John C Beyer says that broadcasters must exercise their power wisely

At a Taste and Decency Seminar held in November 1995, hosted by the Governors of the BBC, one of the speakers stated that it is now very difficult to determine boundaries on sex and violence on TV because the values of the audience are now so fragmented and it is impossible to avoid offending at least some viewers with contemporary programming. The important question, which was not answered, was how far TV itself had actually caused this fragmentation of values?

In December 1998, at another presentation, the BBC launched its prospectus *The BBC Beyond 2000*. The books which accompanied the launch set out the Corporation's future undertakings and commitments to the licence fee payers and acknowledged that "Television and Radio have proved to be the most powerful media yet to be invented". Moreover, Sir Christopher Bland, the Chairman of the Governors, proudly boasted that the BBC had "shaped the taste of the nation".

It is plain that those who work in broadcasting, and have responsibility for governing and regulating these media, know and understand the power that they exert on our society. This power is understood, too, by politicians who over the years have sought to ensure that broadcasting operates within a framework of law with regulatory authorities established to represent the public interest.

In his *New Statesman* Media Lecture delivered in July 1999, Sir John Birt suggested that the digital revolution could undermine national culture and create a knowledge underclass. The instant availability, he said, of the "raucous, the vulgar and the sensationalist" may degrade our culture.

This is an astonishing admission. Broadcasters over the years have stubbornly refused to acknowledge that their medium has any degrading influence on our society and merely reflects society as it is. It is made all the more astonishing by Sir John's defence in October 1997 of the BBC's series *Billy Connolly's World Tour of Australia*. The BBC received an unusually high number of complaints about this series which was characterised by a stream of obscene and profane language.

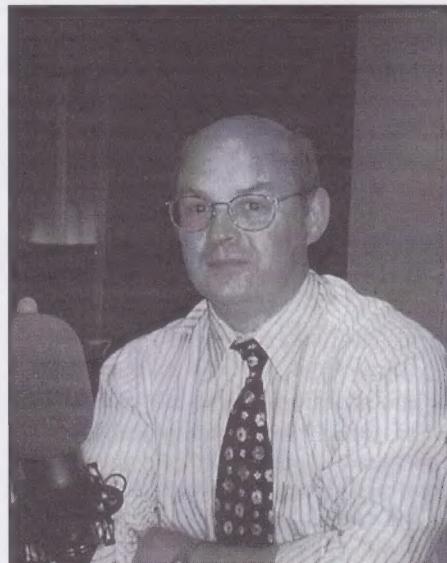
The Broadcasting Act 1990 and the BBC's Royal Charter, renewed in 1996, require that the Independent Television Commission and the BBC Governors, respectively, "shall do all that they can to secure that nothing is included in programmes which offends good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling."

However, as time has passed these well intentioned phrases have been rendered

meaningless as programme makers and film producers, seemingly, have deliberately set out to overthrow all constraints on their 'freedom of expression'. The cleverest achievement has been to convince everyone that any attempt to give meaning to Parliament's requirements is "censorship".

The European Commission's High Level Group on Audio Visual Policy, Chaired by Marcelino Oreja, in its document published in October 1998, stated that "the right to freedom of expression has to be balanced against other rights with regard to matters such as the protection of minors, racial hatred and the right to privacy".

It is not widely appreciated that the European Convention on Human Rights, which is currently being made part of British law, has qualifications. Article 10,



John Beyer – being interviewed for the BBC World Service programme
The Way We Are, discussing
TV violence

which guarantees the right to freedom of expression, specifies that "The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society... for the protection of health or morals..."

The consultation paper *Regulating Communications*, issued by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in July 1998, stated that "The regulatory process starts with Government. Regulators must have a clear legislative framework within which to operate. With greater clarity of duties and objectives come improved accountability for their delivery to Parliament, to Ministers and to consumers".

However, since the 1960s a policy of non-intervention in matters of programme content regulation has prevailed. In a written answer to Desmond Swayne MP on the 14th December 1998, Janet Anderson MP, Minister for Broadcasting at the DCMS, stated that "Broadcasters are subject to the general law and are required to comply with the regulators' guidelines on programme content. It is a longstanding and, I believe, a fundamental principle that Government does not intervene directly in issues of broadcasting content. Responsibility for enforcing the rules lies with the regulators, who are charged with safeguarding the public interest". The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, The Rt Hon Chris Smith MP, when addressing the British Video Association in November 1996, said then that such regulation should be carried on with "the lightest possible touch".

Breaking taboos

This attitude has had a noticeable effect on TV standards of taste and decency so much so that *The Sunday Times*, on the 6th December 1998, reported that the last sexual taboo is to be broken on British television as Channel 4 prepares to broadcast a documentary which examines bestiality. One of the interviewees being considered for the programme is Mark Mathews, 47, who lives in Missouri, America, with a 22 year old mare named Pixel which he "married" in a ceremony in 1993. The *East Sussex Courier*, on 28th May 1999, reported that a spokesperson for Channel 4 confirmed that there was a programme of this nature in the pipeline saying it was about "man's relationship with animals".

Should the reports, the truth of which has not been denied, be taken seriously?

On 10th September 1998 Channel 4 screened a ninety minute programme entitled *Fetishes* which included the depiction of unspeakable sado-masochistic practices, showing the infliction of real pain, the total humiliation of the participants and the display and use of masks and other equipment more suited to a torture chamber. The Independent Television Commission (ITC) Programme Code states in Section 1.6(i)(g) that "ingenious and unfamiliar methods of inflicting pain or injury, which are capable of easy imitation, should not be included". The Director of National VALA wrote to all members of the ITC asking them to view the programme in advance so that their statutory requirements, to do "all that they can to secure" that the programme complied with the Broadcasting Act and the Programme Code, were fulfilled. The programme was only routinely monitored

upon transmission and the Chairman of the ITC, Sir Robin Biggam, in a lengthy reply said that "the responsibility for broadcasting programmes lies with the individual licensees... The ITC does not preview programmes nor approve schedules. There are no absolute restrictions on the subjects that programmes may tackle but the ITC requires that the treatment of them complies with ITC Code rules". Sir Robin said that there was no breach of sections 1.6(a) or 1.6(i)(g), above, and that "It was a serious documentary about the desire of some New Yorkers to submit to domination".

Since this programme included scenes depicting the infliction of real pain we believed that it was in breach of the Obscene Publications Act. Accordingly, we sent a video recording of it to the Crown Prosecution Service. Not until just before Christmas 1998, almost four months after the screening, was a reply received saying "It has been concluded that there is not a realistic prospect of conviction for an offence contrary to Section 2(l) Obscene Publications Act 1959".

This programme was also referred to the Broadcasting Standards Commission (BSC) and not until the February 1999 Bulletin was their Finding published. The Commission took the view that "the graphic and prolonged detail of some of the sequences went beyond the informative and... had the effect of turning the audience into voyeurs of demeaning and degrading behaviour". The programme, the Commission said, "went beyond acceptable limits for transmission on a free-to-air terrestrial service". The complaints were upheld by the BSC even though rejected by the ITC. Such inconsistency shows again how the complaints procedures work against the public interest.

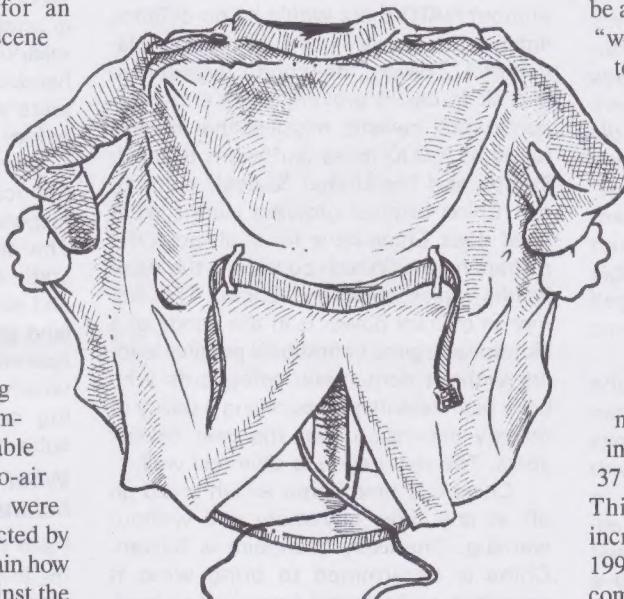
On Channel 5 a thirteen-part series *Sex and Shopping* began on 29th October 1998. This depicted explicit sexual activity of every description, and attempted to ridicule and discredit all legal constraints on obscenity. The Annual Report of the ITC for 1998 states that some of the imagery included in this series was "unacceptably explicit for transmission at any time". The finding concluded that some parts of the series were in breach of the Programme Code.

The Broadcasting Standards Commission also received a number of complaints about the degree of sexual explicitness and sexual language used in different episodes of this series. Their finding concluded that six of the ten programmes had gone beyond acceptable boundaries. The Commission was concerned that the duration and explicitness of what was shown had outweighed the journalistic purpose... the reality of what was taking place, including, actual sexual intercourse, had been clear and was unacceptable for broadcast at any time. In its response

to the Commission, Channel 5 argued that the imagery "was within the context of a serious discussion and it was not gratuitous".

It was disturbing to read subsequent press reports that Channel 5 intended to repeat the first series and had commissioned a second series to be screened in 2000. The producer of *Sex and Shopping* is said to be a passionate exponent of self-regulation and believes that the ITC's regulatory controls should only come into force when a "significant number of complaints has been reached". He holds that, before a broadcaster is reprimanded, there should be at least 500 complaints or a certain percentage of the total number of people viewing.

The Chief Executive of Channel 5 TV, David Elstein, responding to a letter from a viewer, said, "Apart from one small detail (amended for the repeat transmissions), *Sex and Shopping* was judged acceptable by the ITC". Mr Elstein went on to express under-



standing and respect for the writer's views. "However", he said, "I do not believe they represent the vast majority of my viewers, and I am therefore unwilling to change Channel 5's output to meet your preferences." The 13-part first series of *Sex and Shopping* began its repeat showing on the 22nd June 1999.

On the 3rd February 1999 Channel 4 began showing the American series *Sex and the City*. Advanced press reports suggested that the television version was graphic with simulated sex and girls discussing how to make anal sex less painful. In the US the series was only shown on a pay-TV channel as its diet of nudity, voyeurism, threesomes, exotic sex, swearing and raucous giggling was said to be too strong for the free-to-air networks. The point of this much publicised series, which has received poor reviews, seems to be to promote casual sex, with the women taking on a predatory role rather than the men.

On Tuesday 23rd February 1999 Channel 4 began an eight-part drama series entitled

Queer as Folk. (Each episode was repeated the following Saturday evening.) This purported to be about life in Manchester's "gay village". It depicted a young boy, who was said to be unsure about his sexuality, venturing into the village and being picked up by an older man. The explicit scenes of sexual activity between them were unprecedented on British television and rightly caused a public outcry. According to *Right to Reply*, 27th February 1999, 500 complaints were received at Channel 4 and even homosexual organisations said they were very unhappy about the production. In a lengthy response to this Association's complaint about this series the ITC said that "the series falls within the statutory remit for the Channel to include programmes in its schedule that are innovative and that appeal to tastes and interests not catered for by ITV". On the matter of the fifteen-year-old Nathan being introduced to full anal sex, the ITC said that "such a relationship can be a valid subject for Channel 4 drama" but "we were concerned that the celebratory tone of episode one raised no real questions about its rights and wrongs".

It was very encouraging to learn that Beck's Beer, who had sponsored *Queer As Folk*, withdrew their funding when told that their name had been associated with such a series. Apparently, Channel 4 TV had failed to acquaint their management with the nature of the programming they were being asked to sponsor!

The Broadcasting Standards Commission, in its Annual Report published in July 1999, stated that there had been a 37% increase overall in complaints received. This, the Report said, masked a 70% increase from November 1998 to March 1999. There had been a 60% increase in complaints about the portrayal of sexual matters and a rise of 11% in complaints upheld. These figures, above all, demonstrate that there is mounting concern about programme standards which is failing to be addressed by the broadcasting authorities.

The public pays for and trusts the broadcasters to provide good programmes that comply with the statutory requirements. They also expect some sanctions against those who are plainly failing in their public duties. Those who fund independent television with huge sums of money carry a responsibility too because it is the advertising revenue, from business and commerce, that finances the corruption of our society and its people.

It is more necessary than ever that the viewing public, rather than suffering in silence, should make its voice heard, loud and clear, that programming on television should not only be entertaining, educational and informative but, above all, be decent, wholesome and respectful to the audience. □

John C Beyer is Director of the National Viewers' And Listeners' Association

Fighting talk

George Warwick interviews former NATO Commander-in-Chief and *Right Now* patron, General Sir Walter Walker, KCB, CBE, DSO**, PMN, PSNB

In view of the recent conflict in Kosovo, what mistakes were made, and what might have been done differently?

Back at the beginning of May I am on record as warning that NATO had insufficient surveillance assets to spot targets and to conduct accurate bombing damage assessments, and we were relying too much on untested reconnaissance drones rushed into service. [Editor's note: This would certainly explain why after the conflict NATO discovered that all its estimates of Serbian equipment damaged were grossly inflated and that they had hardly dented the Serb forces.] The main fault with the campaign in Kosovo lies however with the lack of a political will or consensus. The announcement that we would not use ground troops was the worst possible strategy imaginable, and encouraged Slobodan Milosevic to engage in ethnic cleansing.

NATO troops are vastly superior to the Serbian forces; a NATO force of less than 50,000 men could have pushed their tanks across Kosovo in only a few hours. If Serb resistance had been encountered in unfamiliar mountainous terrain or urban environments, the KLA could have been used to guide our forces. We could also have armed the KLA and used them to hold off any Serb guerilla campaign that might have materialised.

Many people, of course, question whether there were sufficient (or indeed any) geopolitical grounds for our interfering in this region. Do you think there is a genuine role for NATO in the post-Warsaw Pact world? Former Secretary General Willy Claes stated a few years ago that the West's new global enemy was Muslim extremism; do you agree?

Anyone who suggests that there is no role for NATO in the post-Warsaw Pact world is living in cloud cuckoo land. Islamic fundamentalist extremism certainly is a sinister threat to the Western world at large. Islamic fanatics in the Middle East, many of whom are determined to sacrifice their own lives as suicide bombers, are now being exported worldwide. European governments, especially that of France, are worried that if fundamentalist ideas gain a foothold among immigrants it could do

serious damage to the country's social fabric and its tradition of secularism. The conflict is on our doorstep. Many of the zealots have relatives living in Europe, above all in France. The longer this threat continues, the greater the danger of these terrorists extending their activities abroad.

Another danger is China, which is likely to be the next flashpoint. NATO regards China as one of its prime enemies and without NATO there would be no defence against this hungry giant. With a population of 1.2 billion, the world's largest land and air forces, a growing navy and intercontinental ballistic missiles that have a range of 5,000 miles (sufficient to reach Europe and the United States), communist China inspires growing alarm. What need does China have for such powerful military might? Which country in the Asia-Pacific region threatens China? This immense military power is in the hands of a dictatorial regime of irrational political leaders without democratic safeguards who have been relentlessly pursuing a policy of military expansion over the past several years. The red dragon is alive and well.

China is a time bomb which could go off at any time, anywhere and without warning. One likely flashpoint is Taiwan. China is determined to bring what it describes as its "rebel province" to heel, and if they cannot do so by either seduction, coercion or subversion they may very well resort to military action. Taiwan and the Taiwan Strait are a vital "choke point" which China is determined to control. I have visited Taiwan twice and been most impressed by the aggressive professionalism of its forces. Taiwan would certainly be a hard nut to crack, but the economy is vulnerable to sudden closures of the sea and air lanes imposed by Chinese military exercises. If free Taiwan were to disappear how would other Asian nations protect their territorial integrity and sovereignty? This is hardly a recipe for a tranquil international order.

I give this warning: the post-Cold War world is a dangerous place in which it is unwise to throw away our shield. That shield is NATO.

Kosovo should show that the pan-European defence force talked about by such as Romano Prodi would be completely useless because the nations concerned would never agree to any aggressive defence policy.

Your finest triumphs were your campaigns in south-eastern Asia where you successfully defeated communist terrorists in the Malayan peninsula and Indonesian insurgents in Borneo. With such experience, could the British Army have defeated the IRA militarily?

When faced with terrorist forces a policy of containment is the passport to failure. We could have taken out the IRA lock, stock and barrel with comparative ease. All that was needed was the political will to allow the security forces to regain the initiative and crack down on the IRA terrorists. Offensive action is the very essence of successful military operations against terrorists. The authorities must have known where the IRA was located, both in Northern Ireland and the Republic, and a joint operation could have swept IRA members into detention.

Politicians should have disregarded the velvet glove and used the iron fist, and no quarter should have been given. The IRA's weapons and explosives should have been handed in before any of their murderers were released from prison. I have said before that the time for political pundits to parrot their persistent platitudes that a political solution was the only proper response to IRA terrorism had long passed. The army should have been relieved of static duties by non-combatant manpower and allowed to get "stuck in" Northern Ireland should have been declared a proper operational area, or even a war zone, in which would-be murderers caught carrying or using arms should have been subject to summary trial and execution.

What are your views on women and homosexuals in the army?

I see no reason why women should not be enlisted, but they must never be employed in the front line. There is no place, however, for homosexuals or lesbians in our armed forces. This country has become inflicted with the prominence of the foul and disgusting sexual orientation of so-called "Gay Rights" groups. Physical homosexuality is sodomy and those who practise such acts are sodomites, and should be called as such. Those serving in the armed forces must be set apart from those in civil employment. Homosexuals in the forces arouse the violent hostility of their comrades in arms and undermine authority. The situation becomes intolerable when homosexuals are given authority over the objects of their attentions.

What are your views on Tory and Labour cutbacks to the armed forces?

Military budgets have been slashed to the bone and Kosovo is a prime example of this as we would have been quite unable to muster the military strength necessary to defeat the Serbs on our own. I have said before that the reductions under "Options for Change" and "Front Line First"



General Sir Walter Walker

were much too hasty. These resulted in a 25% cut in the British Army and we will live to regret this emasculation. The army has been stretched beyond breaking point. The same applies to the appalling decision to reduce the Territorial Army to such a low strength that it has become almost unusable and is no longer a source of reservists for the regular army.

In your recently-published autobiography, Fighting On, you wax lyrical about the European Union. Can you paraphrase your main arguments against it here?

In World War Two and in my other campaigns I thought I was fighting for freedom, but was I? Our membership of the European Union is eroding our freedom until we will eventually have no sovereignty left. We have already lost our freedom of

action in some cases, and some of our freedom of speech. I believe in a Europe of nations which rejects federalism and centralised bureaucracy and restores responsibility entirely to individual nations. A Britain where British law counts for nothing and we are simply puppets dancing to the expensive Brussels tune is not the sort of country I fought for, nor is it the kind of country for which far too many of our young men gave their lives. The British people have to retain the right to govern themselves rather than become a vassal state within the EU.

Who are your favourite military heroes?

Field Marshal Lord Slim's book *Defeat into Victory* summarised excellently the lessons learnt from anti-terrorist operations in Malaya. He was probably the most distin-

guished field commander in World War Two. He was tough and imperturbable. I was a staff officer on active service to Bill Slim in the retreat from Burma so I knew him well and my admiration for him is unbounded. Slim quietly dominated his corps, radiating a confidence that he cannot have felt himself, although, even at that stage, he had not given up all hope of catching the Japanese off balance and delivering a counter-blow that would drive them south. I also admire the way in which Bill Slim broadcast to the nation when he was Chief of the General Staff (CIGS). Other CIGS would have done well to copy him.

General Sir Walter Walker's autobiography, *Fighting On*, is reviewed on page 19

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It is often said that we have the best legal system in the world. Perhaps we do, although I doubt it. Surely a system that routinely deals with minor motoring offenders more harshly than those who commit offences such as theft, criminal damage and assault cannot be the best in the world?

One of the first things that struck me when I began my 36-year career in magistrates' courts, upon leaving school in 1961, was the severity of fines imposed for motoring offences compared to those for criminal offences. It is something I have never stopped complaining about.

Although magistrates often impose penalties for motoring offences that are out of all proportion to the nature of the transgression, in general terms it is the deplorable leniency given to those convicted of dishonesty, hooliganism and violence that needs redressing far more than the sentences for errant drivers. There can be few convicted motorists who leave court without feeling they have been punished. That would be uncontentious if the same thing could be said of other categories of defendants, very few of whom have anything to fear when they come to court. Sadly, most of them know it.

Weakness in sentencing

Over many years a culture of weakness in sentencing criminal offenders built up. It is difficult, if not impossible, to say when it started or when it was firmly in place, but most people who work in, or contravene, the criminal justice system have never known anything different. Things had already begun to move in that direction before I started work, but the big turning point was the Criminal Justice Act of 1967. The primary purpose of the Act was, despite a soaring crime-rate, to reduce the prison population. Punitive powers were repealed and replaced with new measures which were called "treatment". The underlying theme of the five subsequent Criminal Justice Acts up to the one of 1991 made it increasingly difficult for courts to send offenders to prison. Although the worst excesses of the 1991 Act have mercifully been repealed, magistrates still pass very few custodial sentences. This would not necessarily be a bad thing if the so-called alternatives to prison were effective, but most of the people to whom they are applied regard them as soft options at best, and complete let-offs at worst. They are laughing at the system – as well they might.

Anyone who knows how to play the system, and most criminal and hooligan offenders seem to, has a good chance of avoiding the payment of fines or compensation. There are insufficient resources available to enable effective enforcement proceedings to be taken, with the result that over £100 million a year is now written off. A quarter of all fines imposed are never paid, although the proportion for serious offences must be much higher because most motoring

The sorry state of the criminal justice system

Brian Lawrence lambasts a system which treats careless motorists more harshly than real criminals

and television licence fines are paid.

A similar tale of woe surrounds probation and community service orders. There is no way of knowing what proportion is carried out properly, but one thing is certain: it is far, far lower than probation officers would have you believe. Their exculpatory nature ensures that many offenders who should be prosecuted for failing to comply with their orders are allowed to treat them with disdain. Shortly before I retired, a probation officer told me what I already knew: the courts would be swamped if they brought all the cases they should. Magistrates saw only the tip of the iceberg. Even defendants who are returned to court rarely receive their just desserts. Magistrates commonly just admonish them and when a penalty is imposed it is often a fine of less than the amount of a parking ticket.

The disparity between the way the criminal justice system deals with motoring offenders, most of whom are honest, decent and otherwise law-abiding, and criminal offenders is stark. A substantial and increasing number of first-time criminal offenders are given a formal police caution instead of being prosecuted, yet no corresponding procedure exists for motorists. Their only consolation is that most minor motoring offences are now dealt with by a fixed penalty ticket, but this still means a fine, and usually a driving licence endorsement that has to be declared to an insurance company or any prospective employer when applying for a job involving driving a company vehicle. An office colleague with a long, clean driving record was unfortunate enough to be photographed travelling at 41 miles per hour on a road where the limit was 30. She received very short shrift when, tongue in cheek, she made a written request for a caution, pointing out the numerous criminal offences for which one would almost inevitably have been given. It is very important to note that police cautions are not convictions and therefore do not have to be disclosed when asked officially, 'Do you have any criminal convictions?'

Fine discrepancies

I have never ceased to be amazed at the level of fines magistrates hand out for minor traffic offences, often to motorists who have driven for years without any endorsements or accidents. The contrast with the conditional discharges and derisory fines that the very same people regularly

give for offences of dishonesty and violence could not be greater. One example sticks vividly in my mind because it involved another colleague.

Everyone, including herself, said how fortunate she was to be fined only £75 with the minimum three penalty points endorsed on her licence for driving without due care and attention. It was a classic momentary lapse of concentration incident by a very careful and safety conscious driver who was devastated to lose her accident- and conviction-free 30-year record. The next case in the court list was a man with numerous previous convictions who was charged with theft. He was fined just £25.

Unlike most motoring offences which can be, and often are, committed unintentionally, one cannot commit a crime through inadvertence. For instance, it is not theft to take someone else's property by mistake. A prosecution will fail if dishonesty cannot be proved. Similarly, accidentally bumping into someone is not an assault, even if it causes them to fall over and injure themselves. To obtain a conviction for exceeding the speed limit, for instance, it is only necessary to prove that the defendant drove faster than the limit.

Regardless of how good the mitigation is in motoring cases, or how persuasively it is expressed in court, it normally makes no difference to what the magistrates do. They resolutely adhere to their guidelines. It would not be quite so bad if the ones issued by the Magistrates' Association were always used, but many courts use their own, stiffer ones, especially for speeding offences. Although nowadays most such offences are dealt with under the fixed penalty ticket procedure, there are still a fair number of cases, for a variety of reasons, that are heard by the court. Fines are invariably high, and often swinging. Courts that impose the heaviest penalties for speeding tend to show above average leniency when it comes to dealing with criminal and hooligan behaviour. In fairness I will say that when a defendant has been unable, through no fault of his, to comply with the fixed penalty procedure, magistrates will usually impose the ticket penalty of a £40 fine and three points on the driving licence.

The fixed penalty procedure cannot be used for anyone who has nine or more penalty points on their licence because once twelve points are reached there is an obligatory six months' disqualification, under what



"Villain - we saw you travelling at 5½ mph. And where is the man with the red flag? Just wait until the Magistrate hears of this."

is known as the "totting-up" law. The law is tough. Magistrates have a discretion not to disqualify, but only if there are good reasons that fall within narrowly-defined limits. The fact that the present offence or any of the previous offences were not serious is not something the court can take into account. People who would lose their employment if they could not drive are usually allowed to keep their licences, although that is by no means guaranteed. In practice that is normally the only reason a disqualification is avoided. However, even that excuse can only be used once because a court cannot use the same reasons again within three years.

There is nothing even remotely corresponding to this legislation for cases of violence and dishonesty dealt with by

magistrates. In itself this would not matter if effective penalties were imposed that reflected the seriousness of offences and the records of offenders. Sadly, they hardly ever do, and all too often the same offenders appear in court with depressing frequency only to be given fines and all sorts of different orders that will not be paid or complied with.

Road safety

Road safety lies at the heart of why harsh penalties are meted out to motorists. People are killed and injured on the roads as a result of the laws being broken. This is true, but matters should be viewed in perspective. It may seem surprising, given the maniacal standards of some drivers, but the United Kingdom almost heads the world road safety league, and in comparison with

most countries by a big margin. In terms of annual road deaths per 100,000 of population Norway and Sweden are in first and second places respectively, but they are only fractionally ahead of us. Japan has a death rate almost 50% more than ours, Australia and Canada over 50% more, and New Zealand and the United States are almost two and a half times as high. The figures, which are the latest available, are all taken from *Road Accidents in Great Britain 1997, the Casualty Report*, published by the Department of Transport.

Whilst there is, of course, never any room for complacency it should be borne in mind that it is estimated that each year in the United Kingdom about 4,500 people die and at least three million people seek medical treatment as a result of an accident in the home. Those figures are, respectively, roughly 25% higher and ten times higher than those for fatal and injury accidents on the roads.

The relatively rosy picture of road safety is reversed when it comes to crime. Gone are the days when we could rather smugly say that however bad things were here they were much worse on the other side of the Atlantic. The rates for most crimes are now much higher here than in the United States. In July 1997 the Home Office published a survey of eleven industrialised countries which showed that England and Wales had the highest levels of burglaries, car thefts and assaults, and the risk of being attacked or mugged was matched only by America. Since then our relative position has worsened. There are now, per capita, more robberies and assaults here.

What seems to be beyond doubt is that the United States has achieved substantial reductions in crime rates through "zero-tolerance" policing in many cities, and by the imposition of increasingly tough sentences on convicted criminals. There is no sign yet that these policies may be adopted here, but if they ever were I am sure they would be hugely popular with the public. It would also end the paradoxical situation of convicted motorists paying higher penalties than many dishonest and violent offenders. □

Brian Lawrence was formerly Deputy Training Officer for Berkshire Magistrates. His book, *They Call It Justice* (Book Guild Limited, 1999, ISBN 1-85776-372-6) can be obtained from any bookshop (£15.95)

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Millennial hope for industry

David Hearnshaw provides a businessman's view of the challenges facing industry today

Industry creates the wealth that pays for all the things that are the hallmarks of a civilised society and is vital to our country's future wellbeing. People should be left with as much of their own income as possible, to spend it in the way they choose, with the minimum of interference from the state.

Since 1945, the Western, capitalist-based democracies have provided the biggest increase in their citizens' standards of living while the centralised command economies of the Communist bloc have collapsed, leaving economic deprivation, environmental devastation and a great deal of human suffering in their wake. No war has ever been fought between democracies that trade fairly and freely, so "millennial hope" must lie in promoting such trade and strengthening democracy and its institutions.

There are some bad employers and a framework of legislation is needed to ensure good practice. There are also bad employees and sanctions must be available to employers to deal with them. Otherwise, it is unfair to the great majority of honest, hardworking employees. During the 1980s, a new legislative framework for industrial relations was achieved. This was a painful but successful process and our level of unemployment is now half the EU average, where restrictive and burdensome regulations and high employment costs stifle enterprise and reduce jobs and competitiveness. Since 1993, the UK has created 2.5m jobs, more than the rest of the EU put together. Privatisation has reduced the role of the state and brought about improved services, lower prices and generated tax revenue to replace state subsidies.

The prosperity of the nation depends heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) but these are being threatened by burdensome regulations similar or identical to those that have made the EU such a repository of unemployment. Governments always acknowledge the importance of wealth creation and the need to reduce 'red tape' but often end up forcing damaging EU-inspired legislation, such as the Working Time Directive, through Parliament. They have no choice, having progressively signed away our ability to decide these matters for ourselves. The adoption of the EU Social Chapter will accelerate this process.

John Monks, the General Secretary of the TUC, claims that the Fairness at Work legislation is "The most significant advance in employee rights in a generation" but to someone without a job, that is an academic point and the "protection" it offers illusory! Faced with the requirement to recognise an ever-increasing burden of bureaucracy,

restrictions and employee "rights", employers, particularly in the SME sector, will think hard before taking on new staff. Millennial hope must lie in partnership, not confrontation.

Our future as a trading nation lies with products and services with a higher technical and added value because, increasingly, we cannot compete with lower-tech, high labour content products. In these circumstances, education and training are vitally important. We need to ensure that our young people are literate, numerate and have a proper understanding of their country's history and her political, cultural and scientific achievements. They must also be taught to respect the traditions and cultures of other peoples and countries. They must have a sense of identity and they must be given a moral framework within which they can interpret their lives and become responsible citizens. We must encourage excellence and train our young people in the necessary



skills to allow them to compete in a demanding labour market, earn a good living and enjoy a satisfying and rewarding life. Regrettably, our education system seems to be incapable of fulfilling these aims at present. For too long, it has been a political football hamstrung both by bureaucracy and the dammingly skewed priorities of trendy teaching methods. I hope that the pendulum is swinging back towards traditional methods but the indications are, at best, mixed.

The danger of EMU

EMU and the single currency pose a major challenge. EMU really stands for *economic*, not European, monetary union. Despite what many politicians in the UK would have us believe, this is a political project aimed at moving Europe to political union. As Labour MP Frank Field said recently: "Joining the Euro will close the book on Great Britain".

The political and constitutional implications of EMU are profound. There is also a strong economic case for retaining the

pound. Joining the Euro means handing over control of our economy to unelected bankers in Frankfurt and bureaucrats in Brussels, where interest rates will be set to suit the Eurozone, not the needs of the UK. The wrong interest rate will mean either high inflation or unemployment and bankruptcies. We experienced this in the ERM but at least we could escape, a luxury we would be denied in the Euro. EMU will also undoubtedly lead to higher taxes and more expensive business regulations as we are dragged closer to the EU's economic profile. The UK is a major world economic power and does not need to join a high unemployment, high tax, high regulation and low growth currency bloc to prosper. We must retain control of our own economy and run it to suit our needs.

The power of multinationals

Information technology is shrinking the world at an accelerating rate, increasing the 'globalisation' of the world economy. Multinational companies owe no allegiance to the nation state and develop their strategies on a global basis, closing down a factory here, rationalising an operation there with the effects spreading throughout national economies. Paradoxically, the very characteristics that attract inward investment also allow such companies to withdraw from a country more easily. The answer is not to create a fortress of regulations, which only serves to drive the potential investor away in the first place, but rather to ensure that our economy is as flexible and dynamic as possible. This does not mean cheap labour, exploited in a regulation-free environment, but, rather, a highly skilled workforce, and the minimum amount of regulation compatible with decent standards and low taxation.

The power of the multinationals must be of great concern to those of us who believe in democracy and the nation state. The American author, Scott Turlow, wrote ironically and also perceptively: "It's the Middle Ages all over again, these unaffiliated duchies and fiefdoms, flying their own flags and ready to take in any vassal who will pledge his life to the manor. Everybody busy patting himself on the back because the Reds went in the dumper is going to be wondering who won when Coca Cola applies for a seat in the UN".

We must have millennial hope and industry can play its full part. The means still lie in our own hands – but only just! □

David Hearnshaw is managing director of an electronics company. This article is based on a lecture given to the Basingstoke and North Hampshire Industrial Mission in March 1999.

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—Harold Laski

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Equal opportunities or institutionalised envy?

Frank Ellis lashes out at egalitarian extremists

Implicit in equal opportunity theory is the assumption that all individuals are equal in ability and that unequal outcomes are due to one group's – white, middle-class, heterosexual males – suppression of everyone else. Given, however, that all people are emphatically not equal in physical and intellectual abilities, the outcomes are never going to be equal either.

Once the commissars of equal opportunity/affirmative action discover this – they know it already of course – then the stage is set for cooking the books so that outcomes can be made to be equal as well. This is all done in the name of something called "social justice". For the seekers after "social justice" equal opportunity theory offers a ready-made explanation of life's supposed unfairness: it nurtures unnatural expectations for women and legitimises their grievances when things go wrong or turn out differently; it justifies black hatred and persecution of whites in the name of quotas and preferential treatment; it provides the justification and means for homosexuals to raise a perversion to the status of a violated right and demand moral compensation and it affords a perfect excuse for Africa's bloody failures of which we are daily reminded.

Feminists, for example, regardless of any empirical evidence to the contrary, insist that absolute equality between men and women is a natural state. Feminism has declared war on human nature. Obvious biological differences and physical achievements separating men from women are ignored. The nuclear family oppresses women. Sex, we are assured, is a social construct. So what then is rape? Social deconstruction? Sex-as-a-social-construct is grotesque and says much about the level of what passes for intellectual discussion that such notions see the light of day, let alone that they are taken seriously.

The disparities between men and women in just about any major field of human endeavour are enormous and long-standing. In the sciences, art, music, architecture, metallurgy, industry, military strategy, polar exploration, sport and medicine, men are dominant. Agreed, there are many talented, conspicuously successful women in some of these areas, yet talented, conspicuously successful males outnumber talented, conspicuously successful females. And this is the obstacle against which feminist aspirations will always clash, unless there is some sudden and massive genetic shift.

The standard feminist response is straightforward – and ridiculous: men have suppressed women for the last 2,000 years or so. If women had equality of opportunity these glaring disparities in achievement

would simply fade away. Note the interesting contradiction: feminists insist on the absolute equality of male and female, yet for some mysterious reason men have been able to "suppress" women for all these centuries. Suppression over such a long period can only mean a highly sophisticated strategy of suppression, which would, in turn, say something about the intelligence and other qualities of the suppressors themselves. It would also say a great deal about the efficiency of the suppressors. For not only have they successfully devised and implemented a brilliant policy of suppression, presumably since they "invented" or "socially constructed" sex thousands of years ago in those long Neanderthal nights, but, additionally, have found time to wage wars, discover some of the profound laws governing the universe, invent computers, conquer many diseases, explore the solar system and, in the process of doing all these things, have showered many blessings on the "suppressed".

Also, the sheer duration of this alleged suppression would be completely at odds with what we know about the way conquered and subjugated peoples behave. No conquest stays forever. Sooner or later, and in historical terms it is always sooner, the conquered free themselves or the conquerors are assimilated, which is frequently beneficial for both sides.

Liberation?

Equally implausible are the many claims of feminists – similar to those of Marxists in the context of class – that they are "liberating" females from "oppression" by males. For thousands of years, males, we are told, have "suppressed" females (spare a thought for Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great, Messalina, Cleopatra, Boudicca, Elizabeth Taylor, Jeanne Kirkpatrick and Lady Thatcher). Then some hundred years ago or so the new age dawned. People calling themselves feminists claimed to have uncovered the male blueprint for "suppressing" females, of which, from the time when we left our caves and founded cities, nobody had any idea. The greatest minds in history, from Plato, through Shakespeare and Newton to Einstein failed to be aware of the male "conspiracy" to "suppress" females. Only the feminists, we are to believe, were intellectually able to unravel this brutal, subtle, diabolically-camouflaged, patriarchal conspiracy and to strip it bare for their "suppressed" sisters to see in all its despicable horror. No doubt some of these feminists are clever, but the world has always had plenty of clever fools. It is wisdom we lack. The feminist claim to have

uncovered a conspiracy is a monumental conceit, an outrageous piece of self-flattery. There is no conspiracy and there never has been.

"Feminism and all the other -isms that go with it are waging war against the great enemy: rational enquiry and reason."

The rise of feminism coincides with the dramatic advances in living standards made possible by the Industrial Revolution. As we move further and further into the era of the post-industrial society, so the influence of feminism increases with all its destructive consequences. Feminism can only thrive in a sophisticated, male-created industrial/post-industrial society – that is in a society which has conquered disease and material need. Societies engaged in a desperate struggle for survival cannot permit themselves the luxury of indulging feminism. Only in societies which are prosperous and bored is it possible for well-nourished parasites such as feminism and the ridiculous gender-studies industry to thrive. Feminism and all the other -isms that go with it are waging war against the great enemy: rational enquiry and reason.

These, we are told, are the tools by means of which the evil, woman-hating, logocentric, phallocentric, gynophobic patriarch enslaves woman. This is one reason why feminism places such enormous importance on feelings, counselling, group therapy, the idea of belonging to "woman-kind." The collectivised mind is intended to suppress the individual and the faculty of reason. That feminism enjoys such prominence in our universities is symptomatic of our cultural malaise, our intellectual laziness and moral cowardice.

Equal opportunity theory was designed with blacks in mind and this is where things get rather nasty. I cite a couple of episodes from my time at an American state university. After some three weeks of teaching first year Russian, I noted that one student, a girl of about 18, was starting to leave her fellow students way behind. She was an outstanding linguist. One day, just before class started, I asked her, why, being resident in California, she had not gone to one of that state's top universities to study Russian. In a quite matter-of-fact way, she replied: 'Because I am white'. It turned out that she was a victim of the policy that obtains in America today, whereby white students, male or female, are denied access to good

universities, even though they have achieved outstanding Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores, because quotas have been established for various groups, primarily blacks with low SAT scores (well documented in Dinesh D'Souza's, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus*, Vintage Books, New York., 1992).

Or consider the hypocrisy revealed in the following anecdote. One day on a very hot afternoon, as I ran past a black woman, she laughed and told me that I was 'as white as a sheet' (fair comment and true). Back in the university I did an experiment. I explained to one of the many officials in the affirmative action bureaucracy that I had just arrived from England and, not wanting to give offence, I would like to know whether telling a black person that he was 'as black as coal' would be considered offensive. No question, I had pressed the right button. At a suitable opportunity in the ensuing tirade of re-education, I managed to ask whether a black person who told me that I was as 'white as a sheet' would be guilty of the same 'crime'. I was given the following gem: 'She's a member of an oppressed group, she is incapable of racism.' So there you have it. Blacks can say anything they wish, from racially offensive language or totally innocuous remarks (as above) about whites, but woe betide any mere white, who even hints at such things. One further example from Hollywood sticks in my mind – the

film *White Men Can't Jump*. What, I wonder, would be the reaction of the equal opportunity commissars to a film with the title, *No Black Society has Ever Produced a Written Language or Mathematics?* We know what the answer would be. This grotesque double standard pervades the whole programme of what is called equal opportunities. To add humiliation to nastiness, whites are expected to collude in their public vilification.

I suggest that it is the very inequalities in individual achievement which have enabled us to progress from mud huts and woad to computers, the internal combustion engine, the jet, the pill, the post-industrial society, antibiotics, space travel and bio-engineering. It is considered politically incorrect to say so, but were one to take the "white" and the "male" out of science and technology one would have no science, just witchcraft, Third-World squalor, misery and mega-incompetence. Striving to be faster, better and more successful has brought more good to mankind than egalitarianism, which, in its ugly institutionalised form, equal opportunities or affirmative action, is the great enemy of freedom, prosperity and genuine opportunity. Inequality – that is the condition of there being many different and innate abilities unequally distributed among human beings – is a blessing not a curse. □

Frank Ellis, Department of Russian, University of Leeds

Points to ponder

"There is a fashionable salon philosophy called cultural relativism which holds, in its extreme form, that science has no more claim to truth than tribal myth: science is just the mythology favoured by our modern Western tribe. I was once provoked by an anthropologist colleague into putting the point starkly as follows: Suppose there is a tribe, I said, who believe the moon is an old calabash tossed into the sky, hanging only just out of reach above the treetops. Do you really claim that our scientific truth—that the moon is about a quarter of a million miles away and a quarter the diameter of the Earth—is no more true than the tribe's calabash? "Yes," the anthropologist said, "We are just brought up in a culture that sees the world in another way. Neither way is more true than the other."

Show me a cultural relativist at thirty thousand feet and I'll show you a hypocrite. Airplanes built according to scientific principles work. They stay aloft, and they get you to a chosen destination. Airplanes built to tribal or mythological specifications, such as the dummy planes of the cargo cults in jungle clearings or the beeswaxed wings of Icarus, don't. If you are flying to an international congress of anthropologists or literary critics, the reason you will probably get there—the reason you don't plummet into a ploughed field—is that a lot of Western scientifically trained engineers have got their sums right. Western science, acting on good evidence that the moon orbits the Earth a quarter of a million miles away, using Western-designed computers and rockets, has succeeded in placing people on its surface. Tribal science, believing that the moon is just above the treetops, will never touch it outside of dreams.

I seldom give a public lecture without a member of the audience brightly coming up with something along the same lines as my anthropological colleague, and it usually elicits a murmuration of approving nods. No doubt the nodders feel good and liberal and unracist."

— from *River out of Eden*
by Richard Dawkins

Overlooked Britain



This 1950s sculpture of Anne Boleyn is at first floor level facing the churchyard in Carshalton, Surrey. A local legend avers that she caused a spring to rise here, in a village always famous for its waters. Two large ponds at Carshalton feed the young River Wandle which flows north to enter the Thames at Wandsworth.

Looking back at the war in Kosovo

Kenneth Bell casts a cynical eye over NATO's machinations in the Balkans

The conflict between NATO forces and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been presented in most of the media as a simple battle between good and evil – a battle which NATO, particularly the United States, did not seek, but which was forced upon it by the intransigence of Slobodan Milosevic. A variant upon this theme states that the US "stumbled into war" because President William Clinton was too tied up with his Senate trial to oversee properly the actions of his Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright (*Newsweek*, 14 April 1999). In either event this was a "progressive war" in which NATO fought only to ensure that the refugees could return home. Unlike other wars, this one was not fought for territory or material prizes. The outcome was a victory for NATO's air power and a defeat for Yugoslavia. But how close to reality is this scenario?

Why did the United States choose to bomb Yugoslavia? Unlike Iraq, the Yugoslavs had never threatened a neighbour. Furthermore, the actions of the Yugoslav security forces in Kosovo, although heavy-handed, did not approach the levels of ferocity that Turkey, for example, has shown to her Kurdish minority. Indeed most Kosovo-Albanians were living in their own homes until the air attacks began.

One possible explanation lies in the United States' position as the world's only superpower. Most countries have sought to accommodate their foreign policies to this reality. In this the United States is only pursuing on a world scale actions that she has taken in Latin America since at least the time of Woodrow Wilson. For the whole of the 20th century the Americas has lacked any balance of power that could restrain the United States, and Washington was in a position to judge the acceptability of one regime over another. Countries which tried to pursue a more independent line invariably found that they had US Marines camped on their territory. A country's human rights record was not a matter of paramount concern to the United States, only its willingness to obey Washington.

On the European side of the Atlantic, the United States has a variety of mechanisms by which it can influence events. NATO is an obvious example; so too is the European Union. In the case of the former, a large American force is kept *in situ* and, in the case of the latter, the US has a coherent body claiming to represent a large part of the continent's population with which to conduct bilateral negotiations.

However, Yugoslavia is not a member of either body. Thus, to Washington, it is a loose cannon. Put another way, Yugoslavia is a state which refuses to bow to Washington's diktats. President Clinton

wants to increase defence spending by US\$112 billion over the next six years to deal with just such loose cannons.

The Clinton Doctrine

At root is the notion that the United States must now maintain on a global level the kind of stability that it has long maintained in the Americas. If the US fails to do this, then her worldwide economic interests may be threatened. Thus the bombing of Kosovo may be seen as part of a clearly defined plan, articulated by the President and backed by the increasingly well-financed armed forces, to project America's version of order and stability upon the rest of the globe. Michael T Klare dubbed this the Clinton Doctrine (*The Nation*, 19 April 1999). A more jaundiced observer might see it as an attempt by the United States to rework Roosevelt's Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine onto a global framework.

In the post-Vietnam era the United States has often used proxies to fight her dirty wars, so that no American lives are endangered. In the case of Yugoslavia, although there was an insurgent force fighting the Yugoslav army, its utility to the United States was doubtful. This may explain the ideology that was at work behind the decision to attack Yugoslavia, but it does leave some questions unanswered.

What interests were at stake in that part of the world? Secondly, why did the United States refuse to settle the dispute peacefully at Rambouillet?

The Rambouillet Accords begin by dealing summarily with the problem of people displaced by the limited fighting that had then occurred. The word "refugee" is not used in the document, probably because there were none until after the bombing began. The document then discusses the internal government of Kosovo. A president, cabinet and legislative body are proposed, the latter to have tax-raising powers. Interestingly enough, although the Accords state that self-government for Kosovo is "grounded in respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", the president of this entity would have been responsible for conducting foreign affairs. This hardly suggests a devolved form of government.

The whole edifice of Kosovo authority would have been a sham, anyway. Sitting on top of the elected president and legislative body would have been an organisation known as the Implementation Mission. This was to be composed of equal numbers of Serbs and Albanian-Kosovar members, but the Chief of the Implementation Mission (CIM) was to wield the real power. This individual was to have been appointed by the Office for

Security and Co-operation In Europe, in tandem with the European Union. In the event of any dispute between IM members, the decision of the CIM was to have been binding on all parties.

The policing of Kosovo, although nominally under local control, was to have been very firmly under CIM management. The Mission had the right to dismiss serving officers from the force and increase or decrease the numbers employed. Even the weapons that policemen were to carry were "subject to authorisation" by the CIM. The powers of the CIM seem to have been envisaged as being closer to those of a viceroy than an administrator.

The government of Kosovo would not even have been able to manage its own economy. The Accords state clearly that "The economy of Kosovo shall function in accordance with free market principles". Just in case anyone had any doubt as to the meaning of this, the next section of the Rambouillet Accords spelled it out: "The Parties agree to reallocate ownership and resources in the following areas: government-owned assets (including educational facilities, hospitals, natural resources and production facilities)".

War's glittering prize

We are, perhaps, close to answering what economic interests were at stake. The region is home to the Trepca Mine complex, a massive facility that is "a war's glittering prize... the most valuable piece of real estate in the Balkans...worth at least US\$5bn" (*New York Times*, 8 July 1988). Aside from gold and silver deposits, the mine contains proven coal reserves of about 17bn tons. To put that in perspective, the United States has only ever mined some 58bn tons of coal throughout the country's history.

In spite of all the reports in all the media about the scale of the two and a half months of bombing, in spite of the severe damage that has been caused to over 40 Orthodox churches (*Times*, 7 May 1999), there have been no reports that the Trepca Mine has been hit. In fact there has been no mention of the complex at all. If NATO could destroy the cigarette factory at Nis because it made "military cigarettes", surely the government owned Trepca complex would make an even more inviting target?

If the United States was only interested in self-government for Kosovo, why did the Rambouillet Accords contain the provision that state-owned assets were to be sold off? Why was the government of Kosovo to be forced to work under a viceroy who would have held most of the real powers in the province? Finally, why was the most im-

portant economic complex in the whole of Kosovo kept off the bombing lists? Clearly any answer to those questions must remain conjectural now. Nevertheless the suspicion must remain that the Rambouillet Accords were crafted so that someone could get hold of Kosovo's mineral riches. Given that the accords were drafted, largely, by Americans, we may also state that it is likely that any putative someone would have spoken with an American accent.

It was unlikely that the Yugoslavs would agree to the economic dismemberment of their country, so the United States had to ensure that they were in no position to argue any further. The plan seems to have been to include an annex to the Rambouillet Accords, the infamous Appendix B. We can see why the Yugoslavs were forced to reject it. Appendix B hands over sovereignty of the whole of Yugoslavia to an incoming NATO force. An entity called "Yugoslavia" would have continued to exist, but under the auspices of a NATO force that was bivouacking

added Appendix B to the Rambouillet Accords to ensure that they were rejected by the Yugoslavs. Evidence is emerging from two separate sources that what the Americans wanted at Rambouillet was a Yugoslav rejection of the plan. This would then give the United States the opportunity to bomb the country into submission. Both George Kenney, formally of the State Department's Yugoslav Desk, and Jim Jatras, who is employed by the Senate Republicans, have told essentially the same story. Both quote a "senior administration official" as boasting at Rambouillet that "we intentionally set the bar too high for the Serbs to comply. They need some bombing, and that is what they are going to get" (*A FAIR Media Advisory*, 2 June 1999).

Another possible reason for the bombing is that the Americans had added a final sting in the Accords' tail: independence for Kosovo after three years. They must have known that Serbia would no more give up Kosovo without a fight than the Israelis

Guardian, 6 May 1999).

It was essentially this statement that was taken to Belgrade by the Russian envoy, Victor Chernomyrdin, and the Finnish President, Martti Ahtisaari. The Serbian parliament agreed to it on 3 June. By 7 June, the talks that had begun between NATO and Yugoslav military officers to begin putting these proposals into effect had broken down, because Nato's generals at the talks had tried to induce their Yugoslavian counterparts to sign a document on the status of peacekeeping forces that contained no mention of the UN (*A FAIR Media Advisory*, 9 June 1999). They tried to disguise this by claiming that it was only a military-technical agreement, but it went far beyond that by trying to rewrite both the G-8 agreement, and the terms to which the Yugoslavians had already agreed.

Too many Western politicians had committed themselves to a complete surrender by the Yugoslavs. Far too much political capital had been invested in the outcome of the war for it to end in a compromise that Yugoslavia was more than happy to accept. Anthony Blair had publicly committed the British Government to accept nothing less than "victory for NATO" (*Times*, 7 May 1999). Blair had furthermore called on the Yugoslav people to overthrow their government on more than one occasion, and he had publicly stated that he would never negotiate with Milosevic. The dangers inherent when politicians begin to believe their own rhetoric are obvious, and Blair was certainly guilty of a great deal of rhetoric of the most sanctimonious and self-righteous kind.

NATO tried to pull an absolute victory out of the compromise hat, but the Yugoslavs guessed, rightly, that NATO would have no stomach for a prolonged continuation of the bombing. On 9 June the military-technical agreement was signed. This document makes it plain that the force that would enter Kosovo would do so under the authority of the United Nations. NATO troops are not to enter Yugoslavia proper, and the secession clause from Rambouillet is omitted: Kosovo, for better or for worse, is to remain a part of the sovereign territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Finally, no mention is made of publicly-owned assets in Kosovo, so we may assume that they will remain in public ownership.

It is obvious that the aim of at least some NATO countries was to sever Kosovo from Yugoslavia. By their defiance, the people of Yugoslavia have prevented this from happening. Washington has been forced to accept that Kosovo is an integral part of Serbia, along with her resources. By their brave resistance, the Yugoslavs have strengthened considerably the powers of the nation state. □

Socialist academic Kenneth Bell teaches American History and American Government at the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City

March 1999:
an RAF
Harrier waits
in its hangar
in Italy for
the weather
to improve,
before
attacking
Serbia



ing on their territory and acting outside the laws of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY): "NATO personnel shall be immune from any form of arrest, investigation or detention by the authorities in the FRY. NATO personnel erroneously arrested or detained shall immediately be turned over to NATO authorities. NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY, including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to, the right of bivouac, manoeuvre, billet, and utilisation of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operations".

Even if the threat implicit in these clauses was never put into effect, the Yugoslav authorities would have been aware of it from the beginning. They would have known that any attempt that they made, say to prevent a mine complex being removed from Yugoslav jurisdiction, could have led to an entry of NATO forces into Yugoslavia proper.

It is unlikely that the United States ever envisaged an occupation of Yugoslavia, with all the problems of guerrilla war that could have entailed. Rather they seem to have

would give up Jerusalem. Kosovo, with its battlefields and monasteries, is just too essential to the Serbs' national identity for that to be allowed to happen. The bombing was therefore thought necessary to batter the Yugoslavs into submission.

Serb determination

Unfortunately for Mrs Albright, the Serbs' determination to fight for their homes proved stronger than the bombs that the US and her allies could throw at them. As the war dragged on, several members of the NATO coalition began to look for a way out. With the Americans unwilling to commit ground troops and several NATO countries becoming increasingly uneasy about the air campaign, the G-8 meeting of foreign ministers in early May seemed to offer a face-saving formula. The statement that was thrashed out contained nothing that Belgrade had not already agreed to in principle. The agreement may be summarised as follows: "an effective international and security presence" in Kosovo, authorised by the UN; withdrawal of Yugoslav troops from the province; return of the refugees; disarming of the Kosovo Liberation Army; a UN resolution to establish self-government for Kosovo (G-8 foreign ministers' statement,

The Paleoconservatives: New Voices of the Old Right

Edited by Joseph Scotchie, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, USA and London, 1999, 212 pps, hb, US\$29.95

Reviewed by Mark Wegierski

This is a bringing together of important, definitional essays (previously appearing in a wide variety of fora) from the leading "paleoconservative" thinkers in America, edited and introduced by Joseph Scotchie, who is one of them himself.

The Introduction offers a good brief survey of the tendency. The term "paleo-conservatism" arose in America in the early 1980s, to distinguish those persons who believed themselves to be "true traditionalists" from the "neo-conservatives", who were seen as being in favour of wide-open immigration, most forms of multiculturalism, of the engorged welfare-state and of soulless corporate capitalism. Among the defining divisions was the campaign waged in the early 1980s by neoconservatives to block the proposed nomination of M E Bradford as head of the National Endowment for the Humanities, in favour of the then comparatively unknown Bill Bennett.

The paleoconservatives have declared themselves to be in opposition to what they call the current-day "managerial-therapeutic regime", which includes both managerial big-business, and the therapeutic, big-government and social service bureaucracies. A critique of the "therapeutic outlook" – the central worldview of increasingly power-hungry, New Class, Leftwing social scientists – is one of the main paleoconservative themes. By considering human character and differences as solely the results of environmental factors, those favouring the therapeutic approach become unwilling to mete out real punishments for real crimes, while at the same time creating vast new categories of "hate-crimes" and "sensitivity-crimes". Huge bureaucracies are needed to adjudicate relations between accredited "victim groups" – who receive various government and government-mandated benefits as "clients of the regime" – and the presumed victimizers – who are subject to ongoing sensitivity training and re-education and, possibly, substantial fines or jail terms for "discriminating" and "spreading hate". So serious have these phenomena become that at least one contributor has surmised that "The paleoconservative rebirth of the 1990s... may simply represent a last stand of a dying civilization" (p 14).

Part I, "Founding Fathers", includes essays from 'paleo-libertarian' economist Murray N Rothbard (a radical decentralizer), Frank Chodorov (co-founder of the Inter-collegiate Society of Individualists), political theorist James Burnham (best known as author of *The Managerial Revolution* and



Books

"Reading maketh a full man" – Bacon

Suicide of the West; Russell Kirk (the leading humanities-oriented traditionalist, an old-fashioned man of letters), and Richard M Weaver (who popularized the phrase "Ideas have consequences").

Part II, "A Resurgent Old Right", consists of essays from the second generation of paleoconservative thinkers – Chilton Williamson, Jr (books editor for *Chronicles* magazine and, previously, *National Review*), William R Hawkins (defence analyst and neo-mercantilist), Allan Carlson (theorist of the family), M E Bradford (1934-1993, the leading Southern historian), Thomas Fleming (classicist and editor of *Chronicles*), Paul Gottfried (the leading paleocon political theorist), Clyde Wilson (another Southern historian) and Samuel Francis (theorist of the "Middle American Revolution"). There are also Notes about Contributors, a short Bibliography, and an Index of Names.

The painful emergence in the United States of paleo-conservativism highlights what can look like the ongoing destruction of conservatism as a whole in the Western world, in the ideological aftermath of World War II and the 1960s. Those countries in eastern and central Europe that would have been conservative by democratic choice were consigned to be devoured by Stalin's terror-apparatus, whereas in western Europe and North America, an increasingly ferocious social war has been waged by Left-liberalism against the so-called "authoritarian personality" – a caricature of conservatism tarred with the "Nazi" brush. US paleoconservatives are in the forefront of

opposition to the increasingly dystopic configurations of late-modern societies dominated by the managerial-therapeutic regime. Some of their allies include honest social democrats and communitarians (such as Christopher Lasch and Jean Bethke Elshain), religious conservatives (the "theocons"), the so-called "Right-wing Greens", the "new nationalists", populist and regionalist politicians and certain eclectic figures, such as Camille Paglia.

This book can be recommended to all those who call themselves conservatives, so that they can experience the polemical strength of a truly robust Right-wing tradition. However, it can also be recommended to more thoughtful people on the Left-hand side of the spectrum, in order to help them obtain a greater sense of balance about modern politics.

Mark Wegierski is a Canadian writer and researcher.

A Bastard's Tale

Sir George Gardiner, Aurum Press, London, 1999, 288pps, hb, £18.99

Reviewed by Lord Deramore

The title of this book stems from John Major's reference to the Tory rebels against the Maastricht Treaty as "bastards". Now George Gardiner, who was one of them, has written his autobiography and forestalled Major's own story.

The book opens with the death throes of the last Conservative Government. This format will grip the attention of all those Conservatives who had relished the Thatcher years but then watched in despair the support for the party drain away during the Major years, whereas others may suggest the author is merely vengeful.

Sir George Gardiner is not a 'Knight of the Shires' but a politician of principle, who was a convinced Conservative while a teenager. Born in 1937, he was the son of a Gas Board Official, who deserted his wife in 1943, leaving her and six year old George in straitened circumstances. He won a place in the local grammar school and while there perceived the true nature of socialism. The postwar Labour Government's dictatorial and bureaucratic regime with its rationing, shortages and licensing were particularly onerous on a single mother with one child. George Gardiner writes, "It was in this environment that I developed a deep loathing for Socialism. At fifteen I joined the Young Conservatives and in that year delivered leaflets for the Tory Candidate."

He did his National Service in the Army then took up his Scholarship place at Balliol in Oxford. He gained a First Class Honours Degree and for several years earned his living as a political journalist. He was elected MP for Reigate at the mature age of 37 and held the seat for 23 years before being deselected. He writes, "From the

moment I joined the campaign to get Margaret Thatcher elected Leader in place of the calamitous Edward Heath I knew what I wanted from political life and most of the time I got it.'

Gardiner was an influential back bench MP who has been accused fighting his own party rather than the opposition. This is only true in the sense that he was a staunch supporter of Margaret Thatcher and consistently fought to keep the Party right of centre. He abhorred the 'Wets' and plotted endlessly to frustrate their efforts to undermine Thatcher and subsume Britain into a European federal superstate. Ironically it is these same Wets, who succeeded in reducing the Conservative Party to a mere rump who are now trying to undermine William Hague. Gardiner names them all and reveals their motives. His severest criticism is of those members of John Major's Cabinet who brought about the humiliation of May 1997: "The true cost of Major's leadership is revealed by the fact that nearly one million votes went to the Referendum and United Kingdom Independence parties, a million or so former Tory voters switched to Labour or Lib Dem – anything to get rid of the Government – while the rest simply stayed at home. They did not see themselves as deserting the Conservative Party. Rather they felt that under Major's leadership the Conservative Party deserted them."

Thousands of grassroots Tories did indeed foresee the coming débâcle and appealed in vain for a change of course, only to be ignored or treated with contumely. They felt betrayed by the Party hierarchs, both at Westminster and in the constituency associations. This book reveals that a large section of the Parliamentary party was fighting their cause against John Major, Kenneth Clarke, Michael Heseltine and the Party whips, who crushed dissent with utter ruthlessness.

The Opposition capitalised on the "hopelessly divided Tory party". In fact it had been split since Harold Macmillan abandoned traditional right-wing conservatism for left-of-centre consensus.

Margaret Thatcher halted that process and reversed it briefly but, as Gardiner records, she was eventually subverted by her own Ministers. The real tragedy of the story is that after her dismissal there was no one to take on her mantle. John Major proved a bitter disappointment to her. Gardiner concludes, "John Major had no deep convictions and little conception of the kind of country he would like Britain to become. Leadership for him was essentially an exercise in manipulation to keep himself at the top of the greasy pole."

George Gardiner's critics in the Conservative Party, especially in his Reigate constituency, considered his overt criticism of Major to be disloyal to the party leader and a betrayal of the party. It was inevitable they would try to deselect him, which they

did after two attempts. The first failed because enough members shared his view of the party leadership. He joined forces with the Referendum Party and stood as their candidate in the 1997 General Election.

The real loser in this sorry saga was the United Kingdom, now being dismembered by Blair with the ultimate aim of reducing Britain to a number of Euro-regions in a federal European state.

The publishers are to be congratulated on the quality of production. The author's style is journalistic rather than literary and none the worse for that. The only regret I have is that a deprecatory caricature of Sir George features on the dust jacket. Despite minor deficiencies this book should be read by all who value democracy.

*Lord Deramore
writes from Yorkshire*

Fighting On

General Sir Walter Walker, New Millennium, London, 1998, pb 426pp, £11.95

Reviewed by Mark Taha

The 1973 biography of General Walker by Tom Pocock was entitled *Fighting General* and no title could sum up his life and career better. His forty-year army career was spent constantly in command of operations in areas varying from the North West Frontier to NATO and his life over the subsequent quarter of a century has been far from uneventful.

He was always a strict disciplinarian, tough but fair: one of his subordinates describes him as a leader who "insisted on high standards [but] we were not playing a game... never caught by surprise. What more could a soldier ask of a commander?" Certainly, he drove himself as hard as his men and one of his reasons for being a 'martinet' was that, as a young officer, he had seen twenty sepoys killed and mutilated as a result of "relaxing discipline and tactical technique for one instant". (The sepoys, incidentally, were killed by the men whose descendants were known as *mujahideen* in the 1980s.) General Walker was to use the lessons he learned in the crossborder frontier warfare in his later and successful campaigns against the Japanese in Burma and the Communists in Malaya and Borneo.

Yes, there was a British Vietnam. Two, in fact, in Malaya and Borneo. We, to put it crudely, won and General Walker was in overall command in Borneo. For this reason, among others, all would-be commanders should study his career closely.

Victory was achieved in Borneo not by dropping bombs on the jungle or by using napalm but by taking on the Communists, both terrorists and Indonesian regulars, at their own game – "operate more quietly, smoke less, talk less" in what then Defence Secretary Denis Healey described as "one

of the most efficient uses of military forces in the history of the world". General Walker describes the SAS men who carried out these operations as "worth their weight in gold and deserving of the very best equipment and training facilities".

After Borneo, he took a senior command with NATO and found during manoeuvres that communications had been better thirty years before on the North West Frontier. He also spoke his mind about such issues as soldiers' conditions and defence policy in terms that earned him the description "a damn fine fighting soldier but a bloody awful diplomat".

After leaving the army, he had a letter in the *Daily Telegraph* in 1974 in which he wrote of the lack of leadership in Britain and the need for a "new Churchill", a leader who "inspires trust and confidence... puts country before career". The response was such that he launched the Civil Assistance Organisation, which is only mentioned in passing here; it seems to have won him the accolade of becoming a fictional character, 'General Wilcox', in Ted Willis's novel *The Churchill Commando*. He has stayed outspoken ever since, writing two prescient books on world affairs, publishing his own newsletter, and pulling no punches – certainly this book shows little diplomatic finesse. He writes scathingly of "ceasefire soldiers" in Whitehall who failed to protest at disastrous policies, the way the Gurkhas, once under his command (he once called the Royal Ulster Rifles "white Gurkhas... my greatest compliment"), have been the victims of both savage cutbacks and shabby treatment, the non-fight against the IRA, and the lack of compensation for British POWs of the Japanese (one of them was his younger brother – who, like so many of them, never recovered).

On the current scene, he understands the threats of instability in Russia and China, the threat from Islamic fundamentalism, and the shortsightedness of defence cuts. His views regarding homosexuals in the forces are as politically incorrect (ie normal) as one could find and he says of the EU that "we will simply be puppets dancing to the expensive Brussels tune". However, his life was struck by tragedy in 1985, when botched hip operations left him in excruciating pain and pursuing a claim against the government for compensation.

I recommend this book; any minor shortcomings in literary style (General Walker repeats himself once or twice, for instance) are probably due to his not using a ghost-writer. What you read is what he writes and what he writes is what he thinks!

Mark Taha

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Inverted reasoning

William Deller says that homosexuality cannot be treated the same way as heterosexuality

The declaration of the Home Secretary on the equality of heterosexuality and homosexuality during the House of Commons debate on the lowering of the age of homosexual consent has very considerable implications and is likely to have profound consequences. It devalues heterosexuality, and together with the reported intention of the government to abolish the married couples' tax allowance, emphasises New Labour's determination to destroy marriage and the family.

In the debate, the Home Secretary declared solemnly that heterosexuality and homosexuality should be treated with "equality before the law", and the House of Commons voted to support him. This declaration was made in the context of sexual offences but the concept of heterosexual and homosexual equality will inevitably have wider implications. To consider the implications of this declaration, its likely enshrinement in British legislation, and the consequent demands of "gay rights" campaigners, we need to review the basic characteristics of heterosexuality and homosexuality.

Heterosexuality is the essential characteristic of humanity, without which mankind would cease to exist. Heterosexuality provides a skeletal structure for civilisation; at a purely physical level it ensures, through procreation, the continuation of the species. At other levels – emotional, psychological, spiritual – it offers a basis for evolution through the rich interaction of male and female, and rearing of the young.

Homosexuality is a practice used by a small minority to derive sexual satisfaction; it is rather unhealthy and only a few years ago was a criminal offence punishable by a prison sentence. It may not be surprising, given the trend of state legislation over the past few decades and the demands of the homosexual lobby, that a government should equate heterosexuality and homosexuality, and enshrine such "equality" in legislation,

but it is hugely significant. This official endorsement has many implications.

The first implication is the reinforcement of the fragmentation of public policy towards the family: instead of focusing on heterosexuality with all its associations – marriage, the family, the rearing of children through the stages of conception, pregnancy, birth and education – as the bedrock for the survival of society, policy will be directed by a need for equality of treatment of different sexual behaviours. The care of children will be treated increasingly as a public policy issue unrelated to heterosexuality and the family.

The further implication is the devaluation of heterosexuality with all its biological, cultural, romantic and historic associations. Heterosexuality, if equated with homosexuality, is then viewed by the state as simply one of many approaches to sexual pleasure. Thus homosexuals can now reasonably demand equality with heterosexuals in all areas of life. This would include the right for pairs of homosexuals to be married and to be treated by the law as a married couple, since marriage is no longer seen as an institution uniquely intended to protect and support the heterosexual relationship because of its vital importance for society. Similarly any benefits presently enjoyed by heterosexual married couples, whether provided by the state or by private institutions, can logically be claimed by homosexual couples.

We can expect that the consequences of the government's approach will reverberate for many years with the attention of the legislature focused not on the condition of the family in Britain, but rather on ensuring that homosexuality and heterosexuality are treated with equality in all aspects. Any attempts to shore up family life and protect children, in face of the frightening statistics on the family, will be constrained by a preoccupation with a need for equal treatment of heterosexuals and homosexuals. Jack

Straw has put a depth charge under marriage and the family. In the absence of remedial action, the plight of the family can be expected to deteriorate further.

The disassociation of children – their conception, birth, education – from heterosexuality and the family, correlates with the significant growth of single motherhood (there are now some 1.6 million single-parent "families" in Britain with a total of 2.8 million dependent children). Confirmation of the devaluation of the heterosexual family can be found in the extent to which publicly-funded single motherhood has been normalised by the state. Any recognition of a general concept that single motherhood is adequate, effective and acceptable is an implicit devaluation of the heterosexual family.

A further implication of Jack Straw's declaration is his extension of equality from what people are to what people do, in response to pressure from the homosexual lobby for what they see as equal treatment. Previous declarations of equality refer to innate characteristics such as race and sex; now government advocates equality on the basis of sexual behaviour. That this declaration has been brought about by pressure from the homosexual lobby represents a curious paradox: homosexuals insist one moment that they want to be different from others, but the next moment they demand to be treated in the same way as heterosexuals. This is rather like going into an ironmonger's shop and demanding to be served with ice cream – Jack Straw would require that all ironmongers serve ice cream.

The declaration refers only to heterosexuals and homosexuals, but if people are to be treated equally on the basis of their sexual behaviour, the many different ways of finding sexual satisfaction must surely be included. This may sound like fantasy at present but who knows where this declaration could lead?

If marriage has lost its profound significance as an institution that supports and protects the heterosexual family, it may become a purely secular arrangement of people living together in twos, threes, fours, or any number and mix of sexes.

In conclusion, the implications of Jack Straw's declaration lead to what some may see as fantasy, because there is a huge discrepancy between the nature of the things that he equates, because he attempts to equate people on the basis of their behaviour, and because of the huge negative impact that his measure is likely to have on society. Nevertheless, behind Jack Straw stands a government with an overpowering majority. Therefore, in the short term, we have to recognise the existence of two realities: the reality of the natural world, and the pseudo-reality constructed by governmental decree. Let us hope that reality soon asserts itself. □

William Deller writes from central London

The Ministry of Defence is facing a £6 million bill for compensation to homosexuals dismissed from the services, following a recent ruling from the European Court of Human Rights. The key question of whether or not the people of Britain –

including homosexuals – would be better defended by compelling the Armed Forces to accept homosexuals was, predictably, not considered.

8 News

MoD sackings halted after gays win Forces case

The Times, September 28, 1999

There is no such thing as an ethnic English person any more, if a small number of columnists are to be believed. Nationality, we are told, is a "cultural" thing, or even a residential thing, and has nothing to do with ancestry.

England, in other words, is not really a European nation at all but rather an English-speaking, human-rights country defined in territorial or cultural terms. England has been "made over" – a *jus soli* state has been carved out of a *jus sanguinis* nation.

On the other hand the Welsh, Scots and Irish – not to mention most Europeans – do not believe that nationality is divorced from ancestry, in spite of pressure from the establishment to make them believe otherwise. The nationalist movements in the Celtic fringes are very adroit in the way they handle this delicate subject, and can so far largely avoid it in any case, because of the relatively small numbers of ethnic minority members in their respective countries. For the moment, the SNP, *et al*, can afford to make pious protestations about their commitment to "multiculturalism".

The English deserve, perhaps, to be rebranded through lack of vigilance. They allow themselves to be abused. Referring to the hooliganism at the 1998 World Cup – a much overhyped phenomenon – Jonathan Freedland in the *Guardian* said that it "reminded English liberals why they disliked patriotism in the first place". Polly Toynbee wrote: "Who would want to be English?" Paul Hayward, chief sports writer of the *Telegraph*, wrote of a "uniquely English poison washing over this World Cup". Writers Anthony Daniels and Decca Aitkenhead prayed that England would lose, and lose badly.

There are two reasons why English journalists give vent to anti-Englishness: intellectual shallowness and fear. Many younger journalists that have entered the profession seem to have been emotionally traumatised by the chauvinistic excesses they have read about in European history. This has resulted in a form of self-flagellation that reflects very poorly upon them as individuals, let alone as journalists.

As for the craft itself, it is clear that streetwise smartness is being supplanted by a kind of student union idealism which ill-equips journalists to understand what is really happening in the world. For example, Helen Rumbelow of the *Times* wrote recently that "Britain is one of the most illiterate of all industrialised countries". But she did not have the nerve to mention – or more likely simply does not realise – that a

That anti-English feeling

Antony Milne says that many journalists simply do not like being English

major contributory factor to this phenomenon is that many students in our schools do not speak English as a first language.

Some journalists are actually pleased to think that England does not exist, and that consequently they have no ethnic identity themselves. Matthew Parris had an article headed in bold: "Mongrels not Angles". "The chicken tikka of Old England" ran the proud caption over Mary Anne Sieghart's article in the *Times*. "Ours", she writes, "has always been a tolerant country, as befits a nation of immigrants..." The English, she added, without, of course, citing any evidence, are "proud of their overlapping identities."

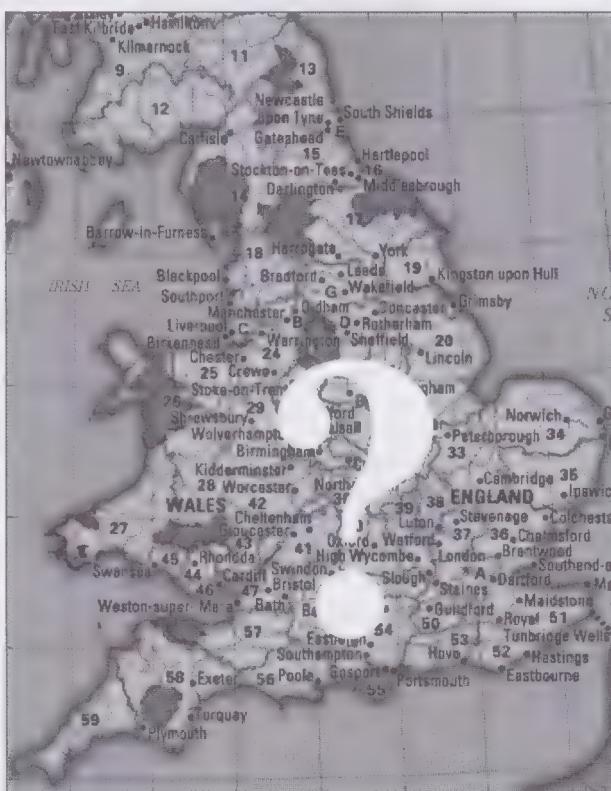
visible – distinctions based on "roots". But there are enormous dangers in this. For one thing, many journalists are ideologically committed to a non-English England. These are the ones, unlike Matthew Parris, who are not kidding. They rewrite history ("We are all foreigners, really"), they dissemble, they censor themselves and put a dishonest spin on multiculturalism, saying it is "enriching". They have considerably narrowed the parameters of public debate on immigration and asylum. They are insidiously undermining the democratic process, and some of them know that they are doing this.

As well as circumscribing debate, some in the media are politically reckless. On the rare occasions when governments are trying to curb illegal entry into this country, some journalists continue to send the wrong messages abroad. Nick Hardwick of the *Express* opines ingratiatingly: "It is time to be positive about our refugees who make an immeasurable contribution to British life". Luke Johnson of the *Sunday Telegraph* writes glowingly of "prosperous foreigners... who come because London is the only major capital city where people live in proper houses rather than flats". If London is simply described as a place where 'people' live, then 'people' will try to live here.

"Positive discrimination" is blatantly promoted. In the *Guardian*, Alan Travis and David Rowan had an article boldly headed: "Tony Blair wants more black and Asian people to reach the top. Not before time..." Marc Wadsworth's article in the *Observer* recently yelled: "There are only four black MPs. There should be at least 30..."

Fortunately there are some signs of nervous acknowledgement that an enforced, merely civic patriotism may well make a real sense of Englishness become "the sole province of a tattooed, snarling 'Gotcha' culture". This is what Ann Leslie believes. She adds that "a sense of national identity, a knowledge of who you are... seems to be essential for the psychic health of any society". But Ann Leslie's is, alas, a lone, courageous, voice in a media world characterised by political prejudice and fear. □

Antony Milne is a contributing editor, *Right NOW!*



Some of these journalists themselves may suspect much of this talk is nonsense. But they do not know how otherwise to respond to the massive postwar immigration that has changed Britain. As the non-English, non-British segment of the population grows relentlessly, so journalists believe the nature and political status of England have to change accordingly, regardless of the democratic rights and wrongs.

Some might think that changing England to suit recent immigrants is a laudable enough goal if it is done purely for the benefit of harmonious race relations. One can understand the human desire to do away with invidious – and highly

IT'S A KNOCKOUT

A long time ago, in a country far, far away... "a conservative leader is facing almost certain defeat two years before an election. His approval ratings are the lowest since figures began." He is "despised by the Rightwing of his party for being soft on social issues". The Left has a "glamorous leader" who has "dazzled" the press. Yet two years later the conservative leader triumphed at the election.

This is a true story. The place was California, the conservative leader was Pete Wilson and the election was in 1994. The quotes come from the *Economist*, which explains how he won: "Mr Wilson's masterstroke was to drag the debate away from health and education, towards crime and immigration". Mr Wilson's tactics were simple - "defining an emotive issue by supporting specific measures that his opponent could not". In politics, as in life, you have to play your cards right, and for conservatives immigration is the joker that doubles your votes.

The circumstances could not be more propitious for the Conservatives to plunge the dagger into Labour's rotten heart, yet all we see is contemptible timidity. Look at the facts. Britain is being "swamped" (as someone once said) by a tidal wave of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers. Even Labour have been forced to admit that "the numbers are high". Just in case you think this is irresponsible Labour scaremongering let me give you some of these numbers. In an 18-hour intensive searching operation at Dover 140 illegal immigrants were discovered. This equates to over 25,000 illegal immigrants coming into Britain each year through Dover alone! The tragic absurdity of our immigration laws means that all those captured will be allowed to remain by claiming asylum. Last year 23,000 similarly "inadequately documented passengers" (to use the official euphemism) claimed asylum when caught trying to enter Britain. At the last count there was a backlog of 64,770 asylum applications outstanding - and these just refer to heads of households. The Home Office admit that these figures should be multiplied by three to get the real number of applicants. And according to the *Sunday Telegraph* the number of applicants is growing by 10,000 every 90 days, while the number of applications processed by the Immigration Department has collapsed from around 3,000 a month to 800. John Tincey, spokesman for the Immigration Services Union, has admitted that immigration officers are "effectively waving people through". Anyone claiming to be a refugee from Kosovo, for instance, is almost automatically granted permission to stay (which seems rather odd since our brilliant military operation there has brought peace and joy throughout the land).

Labour and the Tories have been play-

John Bull



"How few men are strong enough to stand against the prevailing currents of opinion ... Be prepared to stand up faithfully for Right and Truth, however the wind may blow."

Winston Churchill

ing Punch and Judy over who is most to blame. The truth behind this playground politics is that they are both to blame. Yes, the Tories did cut the number of immigration officers and they did give immigrants "exceptional leave to remain" in what was, as Straw has claimed, a "secret amnesty" (a point I have been making in this column for years). But Labour has done nothing to tackle the problem and have reduced the number of deportation orders signed from 1,880 in 1996 to 980 in 1998. Indeed, they have declared their own, official amnesty for anyone who has been waiting more than five years for a decision. They have also decided to reduce the use of deportations: anyone with a child of under 18 who has been here for seven years will now usually be allowed to stay. But in Dover there is a four year delay before an asylum applicant is even interviewed!

The Tories should be promising to deport instantly all bogus refugees without appeal the minute they are caught. As the *Daily Telegraph* has admitted, "When a Right-wing party moves Right, it will often become more electable. When asked for their opinion about, say, immigration ... most people will come up with views that are labelled 'Right-wing'". Yet when Ann Widdecombe addressed an RN meeting a few years back she proved that she was completely unwilling to accept that immigration was even a problem, let alone that sterner

measures should be taken to deal with it.

So why are Labour and the Tories now admitting that Dover has too many asylum seekers? At 900 in a population of 30,000 that is 3%, whereas in Britain as a whole 7% of the population is made up of post-war immigrants and their descendants. As I've said before, when immigration occurs too quickly the native population will protest, but do it slowly and people don't realise just what has been done to them. Politicians can then get away with mouthing drivel about "the benefits of multiculturalism".

Dover has certainly experienced these "benefits", with gangs of refugees going around slashing and stabbing local youths and 13 year-old girls. The annual report of the National Criminal Intelligence Service outlines other benefits of multiculturalism. Jamaican "Yardie" gangs are prime movers of crack cocaine, and are now building up interests in prostitution. West African gangs are heavily involved in fraud, and Nigerians also run prostitution rings. Chinese Triads are involved in protection rackets and illegal immigration rings. Turkish-Iranian groups are responsible for most of the heroin brought into Britain, in alliance with Kurds and Turkish-Cypriots. Now Albanian criminals, known to be well organised, violent and ruthless and involved in drugs, illegal immigration, protection and prostitution rackets, are moving in and linking up with the Turkish gangs. I hope you are properly grateful to the politicians who made it all possible.

LAW - BUT NO JUSTICE

Shakespeare suggested we should kill all the lawyers, and even Jesus wasn't particularly keen on them, but frankly the whole legal system is rotten from top to bottom and biased against whites, men and decent, law-abiding people in general.

The problem starts with the police who are no longer either able or willing to protect us and prefer to waste their time persecuting motorists, interfering in domestic disputes and attending race awareness courses. (It doesn't help that this new 'tough on crime' Labour government has overseen a fall of over 1,000 policemen since it took office, with a consequent dramatic increase in recorded crime rates.) But obviously the police will never be able to be everywhere all the time, and that is why the public must have the right, and the ability, to defend themselves.

In most US states you are allowed to carry a gun to protect yourself, and as you would expect this has led to a fall in crime as criminals can no longer be sure that they won't get shot. Over here we are not even allowed minor non-lethal protection such as CS sprays. When a man in Norfolk (which has the lowest number of police per head of the population in Britain) recently used a shotgun to fend off three burglars (killing one of the parasites in the process) the

police actually arrested him instead of congratulating him on a job well done. Another man has recently been arrested for fending off burglars with an iron bar. What on earth do the police expect you to do when you are faced with burglars who may be armed? Tut loudly and say "Excuse me, do you mind?"

Instead of being our allies, the police are increasingly our enemies as they become obsessed with enforcing the oppressive political laws that both the Conservatives and Labour have introduced.

Thus a 78 year-old war veteran was arrested and charged with "racially aggravated criminal damage" for putting up UK Independence Party posters and writing such 'racist' things as "Don't Forget the 1945 War" and "Free speech for England". Demanding free speech? Why, the man's obviously a dangerous racist fanatic!

Or consider the police officer who said he was "naturally disappointed" when another policeman was cleared of rape. How could he be disappointed that a fellow officer is an innocent man? The police are now so desperate to fit men up for sex offences they will even turn on their own kind; what chance do the rest of us stand of a fair investigation? Or take the father who was arrested and held for six hours for trying to prevent his 15 year old daughter from going out all night in an area "rife with drugs". The same politicians who support laws like the Children Act giving children 'rights' are also the first to criticise parents for failing to control children who end up as drugged criminals. No wonder politicians are increasingly seen as contemptible.

As for the courts, they often seem to be presided over by magistrates and judges from a different planet where justice and common sense are regarded as tiresome and outdated concepts.

Consider the black policewoman who admitted assaulting a white male colleague but was cleared of assault by a woman magistrate on the grounds of 'self-defence', as she claimed that he had made "racist remarks". Apart from the obviously trivial fact that there was no proof whatsoever that he had said anything 'racist', what this magistrate is saying is that physical violence is a legitimate reaction to verbal abuse. The complete lack of any sense of proportionality is staggering and is inviting an escalation of violence instead of a harmless exchange of insults. But why be surprised? The accused was not only black but a woman, and a Home Office study recently found that women are less likely to receive custodial sentences than men (for similar crimes), and if they are jailed this is likely to be for a shorter sentence than a man would receive. This is in spite of – and probably partly the cause of – the huge surge in crime committed by women, who now commit a fifth of all crime.

A perfect example of how men are treated unfairly by judges comes from two recent cases of stalking. In one, a man

pursued a woman for 4 months, sending her flowers, chocolates and love letters. In another a woman stalked a man for 14 years, daubing his car and house with paint, smashing his windows, and threatening to kill him. In the first case the man was jailed for four months; in the second the judge "took pity" on the woman and merely repeated a previous probation order which she had already breached!

Employment tribunals are also biased in favour of women. University researchers recently found that women claiming unfair dismissal are 50% more likely to get a favourable verdict than men. What's more, the government is planning to change the law so that employers will have to prove that they are not guilty of sex discrimination. Presumed guilty and forced to prove your innocence – this is what now passes as justice.

APPEASEMENT

Right NOW! has said from the start that Tory and Labour attempts to bring peace to Ulster were just blatant appeasement of the IRA and were doomed to failure. The nationalists want to be part of Eire; the loyalists want to remain part of the UK. These are irreconcilably different objectives. Attempting to split the difference and have joint sovereignty will not be enough for nationalists, and be too much for loyalists. Most politicians believe in compromise because they don't believe in anything, and cannot tell the difference between right and wrong. If a nationalist (not to be confused with Catholic) minority want to be ruled by the Dail the answer is simple: deport them to Eire. As for the terrorists, the answer is even easier: shoot them. No terrorists, no nationalists, no problem.

Instead we have the contemptible Mo Mowlam claiming that despite arms smuggling, murder and beatings the IRA's 'ceasefire' is still intact and that more IRA murderers should therefore be freed from prison. Mowlam claimed that "I can and must take account of all the factors specified in the [Northern Ireland Sentences] Act in arriving at such a judgement". But Section 9 of the Act stipulates that she had to take into account whether the IRA:

- i. "Is committed to the use, now and in the future, of only democratic and peaceful means to achieve its objectives";
- ii. "Has ceased to be involved in any acts of violence or of preparation for violence";
- iii. "Is directing or promoting acts of violence by other organisations"; and
- iv. "Is co-operating fully" with the decommissioning body.

The buying of guns in the US proves that the IRA is not committed to peaceful means, and they therefore fail the first test. Having committed murder and innumerable beatings is directly contrary to the second test, and given that the IRA is committing violence directly the third test is irrelevant.

As for the fourth test, the IRA haven't even confessed to how much weaponry they have, let alone handed in a single bullet. It is abundantly obvious therefore that the IRA fails the tests set out in the Sentences Act and that Mowlam's decision was unreasonable. Yet David Trimble refuses to pull out of the talks, and the Tories are too terrified of 'breaking the bipartisan approach' to oppose Labour. Only Paisley's Democratic Unionists and a few individual UUP and NIUP MPs have been consistent.

Now we have phoney-Tory Chris Patten recommending the virtual destruction of the RUC as further appeasement to terrorist murderers. But what else did you expect from the man who, as a minister in the Northern Ireland Office, was involved in the change of Londonderry's name to Derry? Inquiry teams are picked to produce the result the government wants. That's why a known appeaser such as Patten was chosen to head the Commission on Policing. The report itself is a shameful surrender to the RUC's enemies disguised, as always, as a compromise between the two 'extremes' of no change and complete abolition. But the option of no change is not extreme or unreasonable. The RUC has generally been a disciplined, professional and impartial police force. There is no good reason to change it just because terrorists want us to. Indeed, that surely is a good reason *not* to change it. And just how seriously can you take a report which talks about "policing in a peaceful society" and claims that it is sensible to reduce the number of policemen from 13,000 to 7,500, provided that "the security situation does not deteriorate significantly from the situation pertaining at present". □

Readers may be interested to know that a "Save the Royal Ulster Constabulary" campaign has been launched. It can be contacted by calling:

Freephone 0800 783 1191

Or visit their website:

www.defendtheruc.org.uk

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Laughing all the way to the bank

Fraud by Nigerian criminals nets £600 million a year. The proceeds are often used to purchase cocaine, much of which is smuggled into the UK and sold to West Indian Yardie gangs. A recent international conference on drugs and organised crime attracted representatives from sixty nations. At the end the head of the Nigerian delegation said, "For the last four days you've criticised Nigeria for advance fee frauds, for black money, for drug dealing. I simply want to say that you obviously don't understand. This is what we do in Nigeria". (*The Times*, 20th August 1999)

New men

Boots the chemist is to open two new shops specifically catering to "male grooming". A recent survey found that men spend 30 minutes in the bathroom each morning before going to work and an average of 45 minutes before going out for the evening. More shops are planned for this growing market. (*Daily Telegraph*, 13th August 1999)

Déjà vu

"The Duke of Roxburgh asks: what does Labour have against the countryside? One of Lenin's chief aims at subjugating the population was 'the urbanisation of the countryside'". (Colonel P E Taylor, letter, *Daily Telegraph*, 12th August 1999)

Shocking news

"I would be proud to see a person who looked like me representing me", wrote black journalist Andrea Enisuoh, who then added complainingly "...racism is rife". (*Evening Standard*, 14th July 1999)

Broadening the mind - I

Backpackers in Dahab in Egypt have set up their own coffee shops along the beach, with names like 'The Fighting Kangaroos'. "They have even established their own menus, with pizza, pancakes and milkshakes. There is not an Egyptian dish in sight. The great irony was that they invariably held very strong views about the environment and the need to protect indigenous communities...the truth is that they could have been anywhere in the world and it would not have mattered" reported Dr Heba Aziz of London's Roehampton

Institute in *Environmental Tourism* magazine. (*Times*, 29th June 1999)

Broadening the mind II

"[The rucksack class's] world is essentially homogenous...Local culture, like local history, appears as a monochrome blur...Today's tourists dash abroad armed with lists, and return laden with

with arrest. As the women walked away, feeling shaken and distressed, three police cars halted them and the women were threatened again. After spending two hours making statements, the pair received an unreserved, official apology from the Island's deputy chief constable, who said that the first officer had been

being examined by the Metropolitan Police, which are likely to be adopted in December. The cross-referencing of DNA material is likely to improve case cleanup by only 1-3%, and will cost £5 million. (*Metro London*, 9th August 1999)

Agitprop extravaganza

The government will spend £100



pictures...The English are a nation more acquainted with the doings of an Amazonian Indian, an Umbrian farmer or a Brooklyn drug addict than with themselves". (Simon Jenkins, *Times*, 13th August 1999)

Welfare state

There were 373,000 NHS beds available every day in the UK in 1987. Now there are 247,000 – fewer proportionally than in either Hungary or the Czech Republic. (*Metro London*, 13th August 1999)

Mr Blobby goes wobbly

Noel Edmonds has left the BBC after 30 years – because he has lost faith in its ability to make "quality programmes". (*Sunday Times*, 8th August 1999)

Punitive measures

Warring Asian and white gangs who terrorise King's Cross may be given "bonding" adventure holidays in Wales, courtesy of Camden ratepayers and the police. (*Evening Standard*, 30th July 1999)

Nowt as queer as folk

British Tourist Authority literature promoting Manchester as a holiday destination for Americans centred on the city's "gay village", and featured drag queens, men in sailors' uniforms and lesbians kissing. BTA representatives said this was "sensible business", as the income of US homosexuals was 70% above the national average. (*Daily Telegraph*, 24th July 1999)

Manx prats

Two middle-class, criminal record-free women from London, visiting a beauty spot on the Isle of Man, were accused by an off-duty police officer of making a racial remark and threatened

"over enthusiastic". (*Manx Independent*, 16th July 1999)

Sex changes

Homosexual couples will get official recognition under the law for the first time later this year under a reorganisation of the £200 million criminal compensation system. The legislation will probably form part of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Bill, which is to lower the age of consent for homosexuals to 16. (*Times*, 4th August 1999). Sex-change soldiers will be allowed to stay in the army, if new guidelines being considered by the Defence Ministry come into force. (*Daily Telegraph*, 2nd August 1999)

Sorry for breathing

On the 900th anniversary of the sacking of Jerusalem, 2,000 Christians gathered in the city to apologise to Muslims, some wearing T-shirts bearing the message "I apologise" in Arabic. The Catholic Church is likely to follow suit with an official apology. (Christopher Hudson, *Evening Standard*, 15th July 1999)

School for scoundrels

Independent school students are being discriminated against by examiners who mark their tests down and those of state school pupils up. Senior educational officials are encouraging this move. Some examiners were actually incapable of proper marking, with one examiner censoring a student for "making up" the word "hyperbole". (*Sunday Times*, 8th August 1999)

DNA is served

Anyone charged with a crime in London will be compelled to provide a genetic sample for DNA testing, under proposals

million on advertising this year, almost doubling from the £59 million spent in 1998. (*Daily Telegraph*, 16th July 1999)

Labour recruitment drive

George Howarth, the Home Office Minister, is backing moves to allow the mentally ill to vote in elections. (*Sunday Telegraph*, 25th July 1999)

Balancing the books

Sun Indran, former "equal opportunities" manager at Brent Council, is to receive a cash payment in the region of £250,000 for dropping a racial discrimination claim. Mr Indran had been with the council for 16 years, working, most recently, in the finance section. The council's Chief Executive said that "[Indran] has been a major influence in helping the council reach its current financial stability". (*Evening Standard*, 16th July 1999)

Indian file

Ealing Labour councillor Gurcharan Singh, who is hoping to be elected to the London Assembly for Hillingdon and Ealing, is "passionate about London" and "cultural diversity". In 1984, on the assassination of Indira Gandhi, he told a local paper that "She has been dealt with in accordance with the Sikh religion". In 1988, he beat up a councillor who was arguing with him. (*Private Eye*, 6th August 1999)

Till receipt

"On a recent visit to Sainsbury's my bill came to £10.66. When this came up on the checkout screen, the assistant remarked: 'There you go – the Battle of Waterloo'". (Tony Ashton, letter, *Times*, 30th June 1999)



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JUSTICE IN KOSOVO

Sir,
I have recently started subscribing to *Right NOW!*, and, in most respects, I am very impressed with it, but I must disagree with the pro-Serb views which it has expressed about the Kosovo question.

The Serbs are behaving just like the Argentinians, because they are claiming sovereignty over Kosovo for an irrelevant reason which has nothing to do with the wishes of the people who actually live there. They say Kosovo should belong to them because of a battle which was fought there hundreds of years ago, which is an important symbol in their history. It is as if Britain was claiming sovereignty over the site of the Battle of Agincourt or the Battle of Waterloo, regardless of the wishes of France or Belgium.

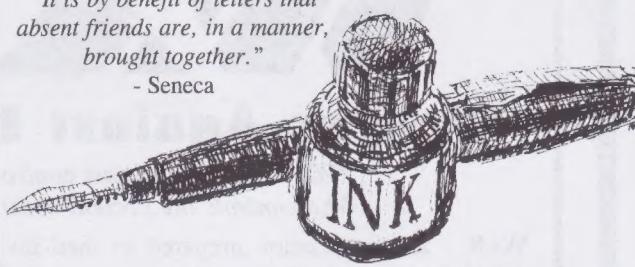
Comparisons between the Serbs and the Ulster Protestants are inaccurate because no one is disputing the right of the Serbs to live in peace in their own homeland under the government of their choice. The only dispute is about whether Kosovo should be part of the Serb national homeland when the Serbs only make up 10% of the population.

Comparisons between the Kosovo Albanians and Britain's immigrant communities are also inaccurate because the Albanians are not newcomers to Kosovo, by any means. They are descended from the ancient Illyrians who lived all over the western Balkans in Roman times, before the Serbs and the other Slav peoples settled there. The only reason why the majority of them are Moslems today is that their ancestors were forcibly converted after the Turkish conquest in the 15th Century. Before that they were Christians for over a thousand years, and a large minority of them are still Christians.

The trouble with international law on the Kosovo question is that it is ambiguous. It is true that Article 2 of the UN Charter guarantees the right of all nations to territorial integrity, but, on the other hand, Article 1 of the UN

"It is by benefit of letters that absent friends are, in a manner, brought together."

- Seneca



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The Editor regrets that he cannot answer all correspondence

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the right of all peoples to self-determination. Which should take priority?

The war in Kosovo may have been fought incompetently, thanks to Bill Clinton's irresolution, but it was fought in a just cause. Even a broken clock is right twice a day, and even Bonking Bill does the right thing once in a while.

If *Right NOW!* is really concerned about justice for the Serbs, it should turn its attention to Bosnia, not Kosovo. In Bosnia the NATO powers are forcing the three communities to remain part of a multicultural state which will never be politically stable, instead of allowing them to partition it among themselves. If the Kosovo Albanians have a right to national self-determination, then so do the Bosnian Serbs.

Roderick Moore,
Liverpool

FAMILY LIFE

Sir,
I read with great interest Professor Flew's review of *The Fateful Hoaxing of Margaret Mead*. Like him I found it inexplicable that the Samoan girls never became pregnant. Mead in fact endeavoured to explain this phenomenon by falling back on the "old husband's tale" that multiple donations of sperm sterilize each other. This fantasy is proven, to Mead's satisfaction at least, by the fact that once the girls marry and abandon their promiscuity they quickly become pregnant! Her "proof" is on all fours with the story of the good fairy promising that a well would always contain two fish provided that no one

caught both. One day a greedy man took both and the spell was broken. The proof of this story is that the well has never had any fish in it to this day!

At about the time that Mead's adolescent informants were blowing the whistle on her, Freud's "White Elephant Man" was discovered living in the slums of Vienna, more neurotic than ever, and blaming Freud (who had treated him twice) for the worsening of his condition. We may smile at this, our late vindication, but we must ask how the popular success of Freud and Mead *et al* was arranged? Erin Pizzey in a letter in *The Daily Mail* (30th June 1999) puts the matter succinctly: "There is a politically motivated million-pound industry, run by political extremists, who have dedicated their lives to destroying family life in this country. The first step on their agenda is to remove fathers from their children and the second is to encourage women to go out to work. The third part of the programme is that children should be raised by the state."

How much less effective as forces of mischief Ellis, Stope, Russell, Kinsey, *et al* would have been if the public had known at the time of their connecting links and special interests? If nothing else, people would have listened more attentively to those who disputed the "reformers" assertions. The successors of the malignants are still busy, with new targets in sight: marriage, the family, fatherhood, property and freedom. They are still sheltering behind a spurious scientism. There is a connection between all their ploys, whether it be the latest

demand to criminalise parents who slap a naughty child or the demand for "homosexual marriages", etc.

The most urgent necessity today is the exposure of the common interests and links between these people, and the sinister motives behind their "reforms". They must be displaced from the moral high ground they so arrogantly and falsely claim.

Anthony Cooney,
Liverpool

CLINTON THOUGHTS

Sir,
I have just received the latest edition of *Right NOW!* and I take issue with some of the remarks made by Irving Horowitz during your interview with him.

First, "The American people did not want Clinton impeached because it would have discredited and therefore weakened the presidential system of which Americans are fond."

This expresses two errors, common even in America: President Clinton was impeached. He was impeached on two counts by the House of Representatives. What followed was that the impeachment proceedings then moved to the Senate which had the power to examine the impeachment articles as to their validity and accuracy. If members of the Senate had any doubt as to the validity and accuracy of the articles of impeachment, the Senate members would vote not to remove Clinton from office.

What followed, however, was the Senate erroneously decided that the articles of impeachment, in spite of their validity and accuracy, did not constitute evidence to remove Clinton from office, so 100% of the Democratic Senators, and, I believe, four Republican Senators, voted "not guilty", which is an outright lie, far worse than the lies of Clinton. The "not guilty" verdict, therefore, concluded the trial whether to remove Clinton or not.

Supposedly, the guiding influence that convinced the Senators not to remove Clinton from office was the will of the people against removal, which

was a carefully orchestrated publicity stunt by the Democratic Party and the liberal press, through highly selective polls asking a few thousand people carefully constructed questions that were slanted in favour of not removing him.

However, even if it were true that the majority of the people did not want to remove Clinton from office, the use of that excuse by members of Congress, especially in the Senate, shows how hypocritical and two-faced the majority of members have become over the last several decades. The fact is, what the majority of the people wanted over the last several decades never before had any influence on the legislation passed by members of Congress.

The other comment by Mr Horowitz, "Clinton has a very high approval rating among African-Americans," is misleading. The fact is, the vast majority of blacks have always voted Democratic over the last 50 years or so, since the Democratic Party has always promised blacks and other minorities all kinds of welfare benefits. There has been a slight shift to the Republican Party, however, as some blacks and other minorities acquire wealth and raise themselves out of poverty.

The scandal and shame of Clinton is one thing, but what is equally scandalous and shameful is the hypocritical action of the Democrats in the Senate who voted "not guilty" when, in fact, Clinton was as guilty as sin.

However, we are living in a political world turned upside-down where wrong is right, and right is wrong.

**William J Holdorf,
Illinois, USA**

ANOTHER HARVEY

Sir,
In edition No 23 of *Right Now*, there appeared a most intriguing article called "Will Earthlings Vote for the Mekon?" under the name of A D Harvey. Many people have naturally assumed that I wrote it. I would like to place on record that I did not.

**Alan D Harvey,
Herne Bay, Kent**

Alan Clark – a personal appreciation

Derek Turner remembers a Tory iconoclast



The death of Alan Clark has undoubtedly robbed British politics of one of its very few interesting personalities. As George Jones said in the *Daily Telegraph* on 8th September 1999, "Mr Clark had been a flash of colour and independent voice in a world increasingly dominated by spin doctors, sound bites and focus groups". The stories about him are legendary, and deservedly so – his every action was performed with panache. As the Left-leaning Matthew Norman wrote in the *Evening Standard* (9th September): "[Clark] proved beyond dispute that the Devil really does have the best tunes".

His "correspondence" was often shambolic. One example I remember – I had written to ask if he would address a *Right Now* meeting. I received no reply, so rang his office. I spoke to his assistant, who relayed my query over his shoulder to AC, who was in the office at the time. Alan did not come to the 'phone himself, but I could hear him bellowing across the office in reply that *Right Now* was "an excellent magazine" and various other complimentary remarks, and that he would be "delighted" to speak to one of our meetings and be interviewed. That was the style of most of his "correspondence", at least to me. Sadly, that was as far as it got; he was in such demand as a speaker that he was booked up for months ahead.

But I did manage to meet him once, thanks to the good offices of a mutual friend, in March this year. I found him to be pretty much what I had expected – a supremely self-confident raconteur and gossip, with robust views wrapped in a sardonic sense of humour, and a keen interest in what he was eating and drinking. He spoke ostentatiously in French to the waiter, and made a fuss about his food. Despite his awkwardness, the head waiter was delighted to have him, as his reputation as a gourmet would lend lustre to the restaurant. We were seated at a window table, no doubt deliberately. A passer-by spotted him and took a photograph through the window. The other

diners kept looking over to our table to see what he was doing. He was aware of all this attention, and revelled in it.

His conversation ranged widely. He spoke warmly of the Serbs and Israelis (he laughed delightedly at the recent action of Israeli security men at the Israeli embassy in Germany, who had shot dead Kurdish protestors). I told him of Jean Raspail's characterisation of the Israelis as "the jokers of the Western world", which he liked. He was disparaging about most of his colleagues, and spoke of a non-libertarian Rightwing discussion group he wanted to form, along the lines of the Sybil group, but open to non-MPs as well. He asked me which MPs I thought were worth involving, but shook his head when I mentioned some names, saying that they were "boring".

He asked my views on what were the most important things "we" should do, and agreed with most of what I said. He was pleased when I advocated alliances with Greens and regionalists, and agreed that there was a need for a new kind of cultural politics – that Rightwingers should, for instance, consider sponsoring writers and artists whose work expressed a Right-of-centre view of the world.

After about two hours – and an excellent meal – my friend and I left him there, still talking to the waiters about food. As we walked along Royal Hospital Road, we were discussing what a pity it was that a man like Clark had not become leader of the Conservative Party, or at least achieved more. My companion remarked, I believe correctly, that it was because of Clark's reputation as a dilettante and the fact that at the time he might have been a contender for leadership the Party, under Heath, was desperate to move away from the "toff" image. But other personality traits did not help. As the *Daily Telegraph*'s obituarist put it on the 8th September: "...his honesty, sense of humour and contempt for stupidity disqualifies him from high office".

Although I admired Clark tremendously, envied him a little, and wish that I had known him better, his reputation as a dilettante was deserved. He was indubitably an historically conscious and fair-minded Tory of the old school, who stood up for style and high living against egalitarianism and grunge – but he could have exerted himself a little more to help ensure the survival of the Britain he loved so much.

Like Enoch Powell, he never realised his full potential. Perhaps he was just a little too comfortable – or perhaps he was just a little too cynical to believe that anything could be done. All patriots should in any case rue the loss of a man who might singlehandedly have made the Conservative Party a conservative party again, had he chosen to do so – and who was a magnificent representative of an old, richer Britain that is now passing away.

Derek Turner is Editor, *Right NOW!*

Suffolk summer

Peter Gibbs, a visitor from Kent, enjoys a glorious weekend in East Anglia

Suffolk was slow, dusty and lazy in the heat of June. The out-of-control wild grasses that had invaded the churchyard at Rushmere were as dry as the centuries of English bones beneath the ground. The thatch on the church roof might have crackled into flame. The garden roses were brilliant and at their peak of colour, but the land was crying out for rain. Suffolk's slow-moving rivers seemed slower than ever. The whole region was lost to itself and unaware of time.

People always remark on how flat Suffolk is, but this is not entirely true. The land has a gentle roll to it, as if a mighty hand had been pressing and bending the face of the earth, leaving gentle imprints and inclines. Across these dry, green spaces, agriculture thrives: wide fields of crops, pig-farming, some dairy cattle. And there are the villages and small towns: Bungay, with its Butter Cross and 12th-century castle; Aldeburgh, famous for its maltings, moot hall and the festival of music, forever associated with the names of Britten and Pears; Southwold and Saxmundham, Framlingham and Orford, places which seem to have escaped all the worst aspects of our push-and-shove century.

There is a loneliness about Suffolk, particularly by the sea, but never the bleakness that you find at some coastal places. This solitude can be found at Orford: follow the track that leads from the harbour and walk along the muddy inlet with its yachts, low-tide channels and the occasional skeleton of some long-lost boat. The sinister concrete bunkers – relics of the Cold War – far away on Orford Ness and the ancient fortification of Orford Castle – a relic of wars long forgotten – provide compass points in the flat landscape.

Weekend visits make you greedy. There is a usually a strong desire to cram as much into the visit as possible, to see as many interesting villages, stretches of country, old monuments and good, local ale-houses as time will allow! This trip of mine was, to begin with, partly in the mould of wanting to do and see everything, although I soon became more interested in trying to soak up the atmosphere of just one or two locations. Out of all that I saw, Aldeburgh and neighbouring Snape were the highlights of the trip, the places which suggested Suffolk, difference, the "authentic" nature of where I was – the idea of being apart from my usual routine and surroundings.

The first thing that struck me about Aldeburgh was the clean, tidy, orderly appearance of the town. This is not to say that it was clinical, or arranged to a tourist-board approved formula. Quite the reverse, in fact. It was naturally pleasant, as if everyone who lived there cared for it. I saw no litter, no decrepit bus shelters, no scribble on walls, no kebab grills – none of the signs which make you despair of the human race. Instead, there were antique shops, a little off-licence packed with local bottled ale, and a trendy gallery or two, selling rather over-priced items – the sort of thing that might furnish some London designer's loft conversion in Battersea.

There were two or three traditional fish and chip shops, all of which seemed to be doing a good trade – the cod and chips at the evocatively-named *Golden Galleon* was excellent. I also bought a fine memento of my visit, a teapot decorated in images of fishing boats. Very Aldeburgh, I thought. "Are these made locally?" I enquired of the very pleasant owners, who looked like "downsizing" refugees from the City or Notting Hill. "No, the plates and teapots come from, is it Oxney, somewhere in Sussex?" The Isle of Oxney, the Romney Marshes, Kent! Well,

of all the places in all the world. At least, though, I was buying something made in England by a real person and something which would come to represent a composite of all my good memories of this country's little fishing villages. The sea-air, the sun on the sparkling sea-surface, the fishermen's huts, many selling locally-caught fish, crab and lobster... I just didn't want to pull myself away from Aldeburgh.

But I was a prisoner of my Super-Advance Anglian Railways ticket – booked on a particular train and assigned a particular seat, I simply had to go. Yet there was much to enjoy as I travelled across country to the eventual sprawl of Ipswich, which turned out to be a disappointing town, a place that could have been Croydon, or Leicester, or anywhere. I felt as though I was being sucked back, once again, into the compulsory world of work, grime, bad architecture, packed tube trains, mobile-phone babbles and traffic roaring around pointlessly. Don't worry, I kept telling myself, you can easily come back to Suffolk, and by anyone's standards, your adopted home of mid-Kent is still quite unspoilt. Yes, there was still that consoling thought, as well as the prospect of taking in one or two out-of-the-way places before the inevitable return to London.

Visitors are often surprised by the phenomenon of Suffolk's thatched churches, with their rounded, pepperpot-like towers. Their eyes will also open wide as they enter so many Suffolk villages. Unlike the stonier English counties – Gloucestershire or Yorkshire – these little communities instantly suggest brightness, even sweetness, and bring to mind thoughts of strawberries and cream. They radiate a spirit of summer, with cottages beautifully painted in pink or white, and often adorned and embraced by roses and creeping plants. Some buildings – and

"Bungay... with its 12th century castle"

Well known for its impressive castle ruins, the ancient fortress town of Bungay is one of the most interesting towns in the Waveney valley. Bungay Castle was originally owned by the Normans, but was later rebuilt by the evil and ruthless Bigod family. Today, the castle grounds provide an excellent viewing point across the water meadows, and are the starting point for the Bigod Way – a network of paths around the town.



there is a fine example on the corner of Chaucer Street in Bungay – show a style of architecture more reminiscent of old Holland than old England. But ask a local man to tell you about any of these "curiosities" and he won't know what you are talking about. For the natives of Suffolk, all this is normal.

Outsiders, it seems, often feel (or think that they feel) more for places than those born and bred there. I wonder how many locals walk along the shingle beach at Aldeburgh and think of the seascapes conjured up by Britten in his opera *Peter Grimes*? Very few – in fact, very few local people would even care about such things. The Festival is the preserve of music-buffs from London, who come here to wallow in the sense of place which they "know" from the digitally-created evocations on their compact discs. And the same is true even for those just casually exploring. Even the "reality" of going to a place seems untrue, for we see, or try to see, what we have enthusiastically read about, or imagined, from our books. We can, perhaps, never see it as it is, but at least those of us who love such things have been there and snatched a few moments of the Suffolk summer. □

Peter Gibbs writes from Maidstone